

TWO
DISSERTATIONS:

THE FIRST,

On the Absurdity and Injustice of Religious Bigotry and Persecution; their utter Contrariety to the temper and conduct of CHRIST and his Apostles; and their Mischievous and Fatal Consequences:

THE SECOND,

On the Principal Qualifications and Canons, necessary for the right and accurate Interpretation of the NEW TESTAMENT.

With a POSTSCRIPT.

By THOMAS EDWARDS, D.D.
Late Fellow of CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

Ου γὰρ δυναμέθα τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας. 2 Cor. 13. ψ. 8.

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DISSERTATION I.

ON

The Absurdity and Injustice of Religious Bigotry and Persecution; their utter Contrariety to the temper and conduct of Christ and his Apostles; and their mischievous and fatal Consequences.

ΣΤΡΑΦΕΙΣ ΔΕ ΕΠΕΤΙΜΗΣΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ, ΚΑΙ
ΕΙΠΕΝ, ΟΥΚ ΟΙΔΑΤΕ ΟΙΟΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ
ΕΣΤΕ ΥΜΕΙΣ. *Luke 9. v. 55.*

DISSERTATION

ON

The Absurdity and Injustice of Religious
Persecution; and the
Conduct of Christ and his Apostles;
and their mischievous and fatal Con-
sequences.

BY
JAMES OAKLEY, ESQ. OF
THE BARR

DISSERTATION I.

ON THE

*Absurdity and Injustice of Religious
Bigotry and Persecution; &c.*

I. **T**HE mild and amiable genius of the christian religion, which breathes nothing but moderation and gentleness, peace and universal charity, cannot but be look'd upon by every candid and virtuous enquirer after truth, as a sufficient evidence of it's genuine excellency and perfection, and a very striking proof of it's divine original. Whoever examines the gospel-institution with candour and impartiality, will soon discover it to have been contriv'd and design'd, among other important ends and purposes, to unite mankind together by the close ties of mutual affection and good-will, to diffuse through the great human community a spirit of universal

4 *On the Absurdity and Injustice*

love and benevolence, and to propagate and spread the salutary effects of social concord and harmony over *the face of the whole earth*.

2. Whether we consider ourselves, meerly as creatures capable of kind affections, and intended by the great Author of nature for social intercourses, or as beings form'd likewise for the noble purposes of religion, the observation and execution of the several obligatory duties consequent upon the relation we stand in to the Deity, and for the more perfect and diligent discharge of these duties, distinguish'd and enlighten'd by an extraordinary revelation from heaven; — Whether, I say, we view ourselves in a social, or religious capacity, we shall find that the gospel requires us to cultivate and cherish with great care and assiduity, a principle of the most unconfin'd and extensive benevolence and goodwill, and with the utmost caution to avoid breaking in upon, in any respect, the peace and happiness of our fellow-creatures, or violating the natural and common rights of mankind.

3. But in a very especial manner are we called upon to entertain generous and liberal sentiments under the denomination of religious beings; and, more particularly, as members

bers of an ecclesiastical community, the catholic church of Christ. Our holy religion teaches us to cultivate an esteem for all our fellow-christians in general, and an ardent concern for their welfare: to *follow after the things, which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*: § to bear with the errors, and treat *the infirmities of the weak** with tenderness and condescension; and by our moderation and candour to assist their progress in the christian life: to root out of our minds all narrowness of temper, all the seeds of censoriousness, and bitter uncharitable zeal: † not to shew ourselves actuated by a cruel persecuting spirit: not to put on an haughty, imperious, and domineering air; or, as if our own opinions rested upon the foundations of mathematical certainty, to be impatient of contradiction, and to treat all, who call the truth of them in question, as either having weak heads, or corrupt hearts. Those, who lie under an error of judgment, as well as those, who are *overtaken in a fault*, we are to endeavour *to restore in the spirit of meekness,*

§ Rom. 14. v. 19.

* Ibid. 15. v. 1.

† See Dr. Foster's excellent Sermon on Catholic Communion, at the end of his Discourses on Natural Religion and Social Virtue: Vol. I. pag. 343.

ness,* and by the dint of mild argumentation, and persuasive reasoning, to bring them back into the ways of truth. §

4. Thus then we are instructed not to limit and confine our kind regards to the particular religious society, of which we are members, but

* Galat. 6. v. 1.

§ “ Let us concur with this auspicious course of providence, and each contribute our endeavours towards carrying on this progress (of religion,) by every serious, fair, and free enquiry: *free*, not only from all outward violence and clamour, but also from (what our most holy religion with the greatest reason equally condemns, as being the root from whence these spring,) all inward bitterness, wrath, hatred: † learning to bear with one another’s mistakes, in this as well as in other matters; nay, rather the more here; since these are of the highest consequence, and this the only proper method to remove them: thus labouring, as well to reform the errors of our brethren in love, as to promote and confirm their knowledge of the truth; *not for that in either case, we have dominion over their faith, but as being helpers of their joy.* ‡ And thus shall religion be at length suffer’d to partake the benefits of those improvements, which every thing beside enjoys.” Dr. *Law’s* Considerations on the Theory of Religion: p. 261. 262. Edit. 5.

“ Will

† “ Young people ought to be taught that there is no *heresy* so bad, nor so contrary to the spirit of *Christianity*, as to believe it to be proper or lawful, to *hate*, or *persecute* a fellow-creature, and a brother, for an *opinion*, which he declares in the simplicity and sincerity of his heart, he has impartially examin’d, and thinks he finds to be agreeable to the sense of scripture.” *Thoughts on Education*, p. 28.

‡ 2 Cor. 1. v. 24.

but to extend them to the whole household of faith; that in the cultivation and exercise of that universal charity, the gospel so strongly recommends, we may have a warm fervent zeal for the general cause of christianity; and behave ourselves towards all the professors of our Saviour's religion, of whatever sect or denomination, as towards persons, who make up with ourselves one great spiritual community, under Christ, the universal head.* Such is the humble and benevolent spirit! such the divine and god-like temper of the christian institution! And what pity is it, that such too has not been the spirit and temper of all, who have made profession of it: But alas! too many in every age of the church have pursued quite opposite measures of conduct: have been influenced and actuated by narrow contracted principles: have appeared too prone
and

“ Will men never be cur'd of the rash and malicious habit of always seeking in the corruption of the heart the origin of errors, which may be found more naturally, and more innocently, in the obscurity, in which God hath judg'd it proper to leave certain truths, and in the weakness of the human understanding? ” *Beausobre*, Hist. de Manich. i. p. 28. as quoted by Dr. *Jortin* in his Remarks on Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. p. 329. 330. See too Vol. III. p. 106. 107.

* See *Foster*, *ibid.*

and ready to think harshly and uncharitably of every religious system, which did not exactly coincide with their own: nay, have had recourse to violent and compulsive methods, where neither the nature and constitution of things, nor the express laws and injunctions of the gospel, will admit of any thing more than the gentle arts of persuasion, and the only allowable expedients of calm reasoning and argumentation.

5. And accordingly, the absurdity and folly of such an intemperate censorious zeal, and of such tyrannical and oppressive proceedings, in support of any opinions whatever, may be made to appear from many considerations: considerations, which must necessarily weigh with every unprejudic'd mind, and be deem'd conclusive and convincing by all, but those, whose natural benevolence and liberality of sentiment have been unhappily contracted and deprav'd, and whose understandings are so entirely beset with inveterate bigotted prepossessions, as not to have one avenue open, where truth may enter.*

6. I.

* “ There are in many the prejudices of education,
 “ a long and inveterate custom, and confirm'd habit
 “ of thinking one way, conversing with one set of
 “ people, reading only one sort of books, hearing of
 “ mi-

6. I. If we do but reflect, how much the rational and intellectual faculties of particular men vary from each other, and withal, that their opportunities for enquiry, and means of knowledge, must be vastly different likewise, we shall find it absurd to imagine, that whilst these differences subsist, (which, as they are part of the original constitution of nature, they must do to the end of the world,) it will be absurd, I say, to imagine, that their apprehensions of things will be exactly the same.*

Their

“ ministers, or teachers of one sort of opinions. Such
“ opinions become so sacred, that calling them in
“ question, appears like attacking *religion* itself, and
“ leading them to infidelity and universal scepticism.
“ It is no matter how absurd, unreasonable, or un-
“ scriptural, their principles are. It wou’d shock a
“ *papist*, that knew nothing of the protestant religion,
“ to call in question the doctrine of *transubstantiation*.
“ And he wou’d, at first hearing, account it blasphemous
“ and prophane. There are also, among *pro-*
“ *testants*, some, who wou’d regard an attempt to
“ rectify some of their prejudices and mistakes, as an
“ impious design, to subvert their fundamental principles,
“ and to instil into their minds the most destructive
“ errors, and most dangerous heresies. And
“ they wou’d sooner part with their lives, than with
“ their principles.” Dr. *Benson’s* Life of Christ. p. 250.
251. See also *Foster’s* Discourse on the darkness of
human reason &c. at the end of his Discourses on
Nat. Relig. and Soc. Virt. Vol. I. p. 284. 285. *Fortin’s*
Six Dissertations &c. p. 66. 67.

* See *Foster’s* Discourses &c. Vol. II. p. 307.

Their mental powers must be equally strong and clear, their acquir'd abilities must be in every respect equal, as well as their other helps and advantages for the discovery of truth, before it can be suppos'd, that a perfect and constant uniformity of sentiment shou'd exist, even in matters of consequence and importance.* To which reflections we may add the great difficulties, which in many cases attend our researches after real knowledge, and how hard it is for persons of the greatest abilities, candour, and impartiality, to make their way to it.

7. Tho'

* See again *Foster*, *ibid.*

" As the all-wise creator of the universe has been
 " pleas'd to frame different *orders* of intellectual be-
 " ings, so he has made a considerable difference among
 " those of the same order. In *mankind* the case is very
 " evident. We cannot but observe a vast disparity
 " between both the *abilities* and *advantages* of some
 " men, and those of others; their *tempers* of body,
 " and *powers* of mind, and *circumstances* in the
 " world; their *education*, *opportunities*, and *ways of life*;
 " the *station* they are in, or the *government* they live
 " under.

" Now these are so many talents, which together
 " make up our portion of *reason*, and severally con-
 " tribute to the forming our understanding, and im-
 " proving our nature. As these then are so very un-
 " equally distributed, 'tis plain that our religious no-
 " tions, or our *law of nature*, must be very different
 " and unequal also. The bounds of duty will be as
 " various

7. Tho' truth therefore be in itself fix'd and immutable, yet, upon these accounts, it must frequently be consider'd as meerly *relative*: and it wou'd be as ridiculous to imagine it possible, in the present state of things, for all intellectual objects to appear exactly the same to the rational minds of all persons, as for the objects of sense to raise in their sensitive souls (according to the distinction of the antient philosophy, §) the same uniform sensation. The truth is, an uniformity of religious sentiments in all points of faith and doctrine, can never be expected, whilst christians are men, and of course have such various capacities and advantages, such different

“ various as the degrees of knowledge in every man,
“ and likewise be enlarg'd in proportion to the gradual
“ improvements in the same man.” Dr. *Law's* Considerations &c. p. 6. Edit. 5. See too p. 33.

“ The same thing obtains remarkably in each
“ system, even in those of *Christianity* itself; which to
“ different persons, and in different times and places,
“ appears in a very different light: though so much
“ always, every where, lies level to all, as is absolutely
“ requir'd of each; and so much also as will, or might,
“ have a very considerable influence upon their lives
“ and manners.” Ibid. p. 34.

§ Vide *Wetstenium* ad 1 Theff. 5. v. 23. See likewise *Peirce* on Hebrews 4. v. 12. *Le Clerc's* Prolegomena Histor. Eccles. Sect. II. Cap. III. 11.

ferent educations, passions, and interests.†

8. II. It will be found, I imagine, no trifling or groundless observation, that the generality of every sect and denomination of christians, are tenacious of their own particular opinions, not from having given them a careful

† See *Foster* on Cathol. Commun. p. 337. 338: See too *Dedication to Essay on Spirit &c.* by the late Bishop of Clogher: p. 6. Edit. 2. “In hac humani generis ignorantia et inscitia, tam variis adfectibus præpedita, nemo prudens expectet omnes posse, idem ut sentiant, ac faciant, vi aut rationibus adduci.—nec minus eruditi, adfectibusve aut educationis præjudiciis, aliisque occæcati, quales semper erunt longe plurimi, rationum pondus satis intelligunt; nec interea cogendi sunt contra id quod sentiunt, facere aut loqui.” *Clericus* in libel. *de eligenda inter Christian. dissent. Sentent.* ad calcem opusc. *Grotian. de Verit. &c.* adject. § 13.

“It is—to be hop’d, that a time will come, when religion will have a fairer, and a more alluring aspect; when christians will be united, not in opinion as to all theological points, for that is impossible, whilst men are men, but that they will be united in benevolence and charity, in intercommunion, and in one common and simple profession of faith; that their manners will be suitable to their profession, and that they will be more peaceable, more virtuous, and more pious.” *Fortin’s* Remarks on E. H. Vol. III. p. 445.

“—It is not in the wit, or in the power of man, or rather, it is an impossibility, to prevent diversity of opinions; since this is the unavoidable result of human imperfection, and human liberty; and is not
“to

careful and impartial examination, and, in consequence of that, acquir'd a rational and solid conviction of the truth of them, but merely because they have been educated in them, and they were the opinions of their fathers, and forefathers.* They descend to them

“to be remov'd, unless we had more light, or less
“agency.” Ibid. Vol. I. Pref. p. 13. 14.

I cannot help remarking by the way, that the above argument may be urg'd with as great force against the licentious infidel, as the strait-lac'd bigot. The deists, among the rest of their sophisms to invalidate the truth and authenticity of the christian-revelation, have alledg'd the great diversity and contrariety of sentiment, observable in the christian world. I call this a mere sophism, and a futile insignificant cavil: For, as we have seen, an unity of belief and speculative opinion (and matters of belief and speculative opinion are the principal causes of the unhappy divisions in the christian church,) can never possibly subsist, unless the condition of men was to be entirely chang'd, and their nature new modell'd. §. The great design of the gospel was to reform the superstitious notions, and dissolute practises of mankind, *i. e.* to make them truly pious, benevolent, and virtuous; not to effect impossibilities. Besides, this notable logic will equally affect *natural religion*, or the *law of nature*; as sufficiently appears from the extract from Dr. Law just now made § 6. and from what he farther discourses upon the same subject, p. 6. 7. of *Considerations &c.*

* “—Whatever was the creed of their father, or
“tutor, that will be their's, from their infancy, to
“their lives end.” *Dedication to Essay on Spirit &c.*
by the late Bishop of Clogher: p. 7. Edit 2.

— “Ninety

§ See *Foster's Discourses &c.* Vol. II. p. 307.

them like titles, or estates; and tho' really irrational and absurd, incompatible with the dictates of reason, repugnant to the moral attributes of the Deity, and abhorrent to the sentiments of nature and humanity, yet still are held sacred, earnestly contended for, and religiously adher'd to, from an immoveable persuasion, that they are the genuine fundamentals of christian theology, and that nothing less than eternal happiness or misery, depends upon the belief, or disbelief of them.

9. Now certainly such tenets as these, can, at best, be look'd upon but as *religious prejudices*: and so long as these continue in the world, it will be morally impossible, that ever a sameness of opinion, and an unity of faith and doctrine shou'd universally prevail.

10. For the prejudices of education in general, and more particularly those of the religious kind, are a sort of universal charm, which, in some degree, infatuate and stupify the

“ — Ninety nine in an hundred of those who are
 “ Christians, wou'd probably have been Mahome-
 “ tans, if they had been born in Turkey, and you'd
 “ have imbibed their religion, as they do their native
 “ tongue, along with their mothers milk :” Ibid.
 p. 36.

the human understanding, and are more than any thing else, the parent of a blind credulity and implicit faith: They give the judgment a strong bias towards one particular set of principles, which, without the least previous examination, are at once admitted, as certain and infallible; and all others, tho' never so just and rational, are discredited and vilified, as ridiculous and absurd: Nay, so great is the blinding and infatuating power of prejudicate notions, that they make men conceited even of their ignorance, and obstinate in the defence of the most palpable errors.†

11. The extreme absurdity of the bigot then most evidently appears from hence: That he is aiming at an end, which but the least reflection wou'd teach him, can never be attain'd: That he is labouring with such uncommon ardour, unwearied diligence, and indefatigable toil, to bring about—what? Why truly, An unity of belief and opinion: that is, in other words, what is, according to the present constitution of things, a romantic and visionary, an unnatural and impossible scheme.

12. Sup-

† See *Foster's Discourses &c.* Vol. I. p. 369. 370. 284. 285.

12. Supposing it however compatible with the present condition and circumstances of human nature, 'Tis not

III. To be effected by force and violence:† The most that can be expected from these expedients is an outward uniform profession, or, a mere agreement and harmony of sounds: which, as it cou'd not possibly be accompanied with the inward persuasion of the mind, wou'd be, in by far the greatest part of mankind, bare-fac'd hypocrisy, disingenuous insincerity, and empty formality.*

13. Force

† “ — You can no more subdue the understanding with blows, than beat down a castle with syllogisms.”
Jortin's Remarks on E. H. Vol. I. p. 24.

“ He (Alexander bishop of Alexandria,) commanded Arius to come over to his sentiments, and to quit his own; as if a man cou'd change his opinions, as easily as he can change his coat! του Αρειου ομοιωσ φρονειν εκλευσε. *Soz. Ibid. Vol. III. p. 44.*

“ To oppress and persecute — is scandalous in itself, and can produce no good effect. Never was any man beaten into a right understanding, and never did God give a blessing to such proceedings.”
Idem. Six Dissertations &c. p. 98. See too p. 30.

* “ — If the inquisitors wou'd act thus, it wou'd be better for their prisoners in this world, and for themselves in the next. It will then be found a poor excuse for their cruelty, that it help'd to fill the church with nominal catholics, and to keep up an unity of exoteric faith in the bond of ignorance, fear, and hypocrisy.

“ Men

13. Force and compulsion may indeed, as Dr. *Clarke* very justly observes, produce “an unity of opinion in the bond of ignorance, or unity of practise in the bond of hypocrisy;” but can never be productive of the Apostle’s unity, “*The unity of the spirit in the bond of sincerity and peace.*”*

14. In truth, the very notion of *compelling* men to embrace such or such a religion, is mere nonsense, and a self-contradiction: For if the very essence of all religion and moral virtue consists, as most undoubtedly it does, in the free choice of the will,† to force a man in such a case is, To *force* him to be *free*; i. e. To make him free and not free at the

“Men will compel others, not, to think with them, for that is impossible; but to say they do; upon which they obtain full leave, not to think or reason at all, and this is call’d *Unity*: which is somewhat like the behaviour of the Romans, as it is describ’d by a brave country-man of ours in Tacitus, — *Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*” Idem. Remarks, &c. Vol. I. Pref. p. 22. Compare Vol. III. p. 243, &c. *Benson’s* Life of Christ: p. 330.

* *Clarke’s* Sermons: Vol. VII. p. 12. Edit. 7. 12^{mo} Ephes. 4. v. 3.

† “—Cultus Dei nullus est, nisi ab animo volente procedat. Voluntas autem docendo et suadendo elicitur; non minis, non vi. Coactus qui credit, non credit, sed credere se simulat, ut malum vitet.” *Grotius* de Veritate, &c. lib. 6. § 7. p. 286. Edit.

the same time. “ To attempt to influence
 “ the will by force, says the great writer just
 “ quoted, is like applying sounds to the eyes,
 “ in order to be seen, or colours to the ears,
 “ in order to be heard. The absurdity, in
 “ both cases, is exactly the same: For as no-
 “ thing affects the eyes, but light, nor the
 “ ears, but sounds, so nothing affects the un-
 “ derstanding and the will, but reason and
 “ persuasion. A man’s *external* acts may in-
 “ deed be compell’d, or may be restrain’d by
 “ force; and, in many cases, ’tis very fit they
 “ shou’d be so: but the *inward* acts of the mind
 “ cannot be forc’d; nor is it possible for a
 “ man to be *compell’d against* his will, to fear
 “ God, and be sincerely religious.” — Nay,
 “ God himself, as he very truly remarks,
 “ whose power is infinite, yet compels and
 “ over-rules no man in matters of morality :”
 — Nor *can* he be suppos’d to do it without
 “ a manifest inconsistency in the nature of the
 “ thing: For the *essence* of religion or virtue
 “ consists in the *free-choice* of the will: so that
 “ to *compel* a man in *this* case, by taking
 “ away

Cleric. To the same purpose *Lactantius* quoted in
 the Note below: “ Nihil est enim tam voluntarium
 “ quam religio; in qua si animus sacrificantis adver-
 “ sus est, jam sublata, jam nulla est.”

“away his freedom, is indeed *destroying the faculty itself*, or *removing the subject*, in which virtue was to reside.”* — And most undoubtedly, to treat mankind in this manner, is not to treat them as men, or as free moral agents, but as beings destitute of all intellectual and moral liberty, and nothing more than mere animal machines. But farther:

15. The religious zealot not only acts upon absurd and self-contradictory, but likewise

IV. Unjust and unequitable principles: He is violating, and trampling upon the natural and common rights of mankind. That every man has a right to think for himself, in the proper and legitimate sense of the word, seems to be a self-evident principle: I say, in the proper and legitimate sense of the word: For I wou'd by no means be understood to mean that *licentious levity of thinking*, which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of our modern unbelievers, but A SOBER AND SERIOUS FREEDOM OF THOUGHT *in a sincere and impartial enquiry after truth*: That kind of *free-thinking*, which, to use the words of Dr. Bentley, “is as necessary to the rational mind, as respiration is to the vital body:”

“ With-

* Ibid. p. 8. 9. 10.

“ Without which all religions, that ever have
 “ been, are, or may be, are equally com-
 “ mendable,” and the same individual persons
 wou’d have been papists at Rome, protestants
 in England, and mahometans in Turkey:
 That *freedom of thought*, “ upon which, as this
 “ celebrated writer goes on to observe, christi-
 “ anity itself depended at it’s first propaga-
 “ tion; upon which the reformation was
 “ grounded, and is still maintain’d and sup-
 “ ported :” * That *freedom of thought*, which,
 if duly exercised, will naturally lead to a
 rational conviction, and thorough belief of
 the truth of the gospel; and the want of which
 will as naturally be productive of rank super-
 stition, a bigotted enthusiasm, or a total infi-
 delity: In a word, That *freedom of thought* and
 enquiry, which wou’d, in a great measure,
 have prevented those factions and schisms,
 those absurd and extravagant opinions, which,
 to the great prejudice of reveal’d religion,
 have so long prevail’d in the christian church.

16. I cannot help imagining therefore, that
 those, who have represented all freedom of
 thought in religious matters, as drawing after
 it dangerous consequences, and opening a
 door to atheism, deism, and every species of
 lati-

* Remarks upon Free-thinking: V.

latitudinarian principles, have forgot to make in this case a very necessary, and (one shou'd suppose,) a very obvious distinction between a *rational liberty* and an *unbounded licentiousness*: Or, perhaps, without even considering the true and genuine import of the expression, they have affix'd bad ideas to it, meerly because the patrons and friends of scepticism and infidelity have generally assum'd the character of *free-thinkers*: which is certainly to be led away by sounds, and to attend not to things, but words. For those good gentlemen have unfortunately laid claim to what by no means belongs to them. They may very justly be stil'd *licentious-thinkers*, *half-thinkers*, or perhaps, with still greater propriety, *no-thinkers*: But as to the title of *FREE-thinkers*,* the lives

* “ — What *Aristippus* once said, when he was
“ pleas'd with some sweet unguent, *Curse on those*
“ *effeminate wretches, that have made so pretty a thing*
“ *scandalous*, may be applied to Him (*Collins*) and
“ his tribe, for bringing a scandal on so good a word
“ as *Free-thinking*, that does not belong to them.
“ They *Free*, by way of distinction? that have the
“ most slavish of systems, mere matter, eternal sequel
“ of causes; chain'd Fatalists, fetter'd *Spinosists*. They
“ *Thinkers*, by way of eminence? who have proper
“ title to no thought, but that of the *Fool*, when he
“ said in his heart, *there was no God*. For this is the
“ first and last of all their glorious searches.” *Bentley's*
Remarks on Free-thinking: XXXIX. See too III. IV.

lives and writings of the sect most abundantly shew, that of all men in the world, they have no pretensions to it.† With full as good a grace might they arrogate to themselves the title of *Profound Scholars*; after having most
 amply

† “— I positively affirm, that no man in his senses, “ educated in our holy religion, ever did, or cou’d “ fall from it to atheism, ’till by considering his own “ actions and designs, he despair’d of the promises of “ christianity, and look’d upon it with fear and terror.”

“ In that case indeed, and in that alone, out of uneasiness of mind they wish all religion was false; “ and that is the original of modern *Free-thinking*.” —

“ That this is the very case of our author, and “ those of his club, is pretty notorious. Inquire closely “ into their lives, and there you will find the true reason, why they clamour against religion.” — Ibid. XV. Compare *Clarke’s Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Relig.* p. 449. &c. Edit. 9.

“ The cause of infidelity is uniformly the same in “ all ages, and in all countries, wherever the gospel is “ fairly laid before men. *This is the condemnation, “ that light is come into the world; and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*” Benson’s *Life of Christ*: p. 294.

With regard to the *writings* of the illustrious sect, the true scope and design of most of them is evidently, to decry and vilify not only Christianity, but all religion in general, *Natural*, as well as reveal’d: To set aside the moral attributes of the Deity; to explode the notion of a Providence; to invalidate the obligations of Virtue; to discredit the belief of a Future State of rewards and punishments; and thus to sink and degrade the human species to a level with *the beasts that perish*. The choice principles and dogmata these authors
 really

amply and emphatically verified the poet's observation, that

“A little learning is a dangerous thing.” §

17. Without making a longer digression then, I shall not scruple to assert, and especially in

really inculcate and recommend, are as *Bentley* rightly saw, and as he has well express'd them, “That the Scripture is a forgery; Christianity an imposture; the Worship of God superstition; Hell a fable, and Heaven a dream; that our Life is without providence, and our Death without hope, like that of asses and dogs:” (Remarks &c. IV. p. 20.) Now writers of this complexion, are not, as they are usually stil'd, *Deists*: (for a deist properly so call'd, acknowledges not only the being and existence, but the providential care and government of God; the obligatory duties of morality, and a future state of retribution:) they are *partial Atheists*: But 'tis impossible for a partial Atheist ever to be a *Free-Thinker*: For says the great man just quoted, “A person may easily rob, plunder, perjure, debauch, or drink himself into atheism: but it's impossible he can think himself into it: let him think thoroughly; come duly prepar'd, and proceed patiently and impartially; and I dare be answerable for him, without an office of insurance.” Remarks &c. XXXIX. p. 148.

§ *Pope's Essay on Criticism*: lin. 215.

The deistical (I should rather say, as we have seen, *atheistical*,) writers are as remarkable for the want of literature and knowledge, as of morality and virtue. To instance in the great champion *Collins* just now mention'd: What a poor creature in learning has *Bentley* shewn him to have been: In truth, he knew nothing at all of the matter: He was, as the Dr. calls

in these enlighten'd times, and the present improv'd state of sacred literature, and christian theology, that — To examine into the real merits of different religious opinions with candour and impartiality, and to embrace that which carries with it the greatest conformity to truth, is the natural right of every man, as he is a reasonable creature; and the great end, for which his reason was given him. Religion, in the very notion of it, implies

him, an “*illiterate scribler,*” an “*unthinking shallow fellow,*” who “perpetually betray'd a profound ignorance in all science, in all antiquity, and in the very languages it is convey'd in:” — who “cou'd scarce step three lines in the easiest classic author produc'd by himself, without a notorious blunder:” — who “did not understand the meer grammatical sense, much less the application and import of any old passage he cited.” *Remarks &c.* p. 217. 174. 24. 28. 46. 47. Edit. 8.

If I may make an observation *en passant*, I look upon these *Remarks upon Free-thinking* to be one of the most capital and masterly performances, that have ever appear'd in English: and I am at a loss which to admire most, the stupidity, ignorance, and blunders of *Collins*, or the wit, erudition, and accuracy of *Bentley*.

— “Our modern infidels, — in finding fault with the bible, often betray a want of taste, and of acquaintance with antiquity, as well as a want of religion and candour of mind. And, if they cou'd but destroy the bible, they are such *Goths* and *Vandals*, as seem to be willing to destroy, along with it,
“all

plies the exertion of the intellectual faculties, and freedom of choice: that a person is *fully persuaded in his own mind*, as to the faith, which he professes, and the manner, in which he worships the supreme Being: that his opinions are the result of mature thought, and a diligent enquiry, and founded upon the deliberate conviction of his understanding and conscience: that, according to the Apostle's in-

“all the monuments of antient learning, and reduce us to a state of ignorance and barbarism, as bad as *Laplanders*, or *Hottentots*. The study of the *bible* greatly promotes the knowledge of antient learning. And antiquity bears testimony to the *bible*, as well as helps to explaine and illustrate it.” *Benson's Life of Christ*: p. 241.

—“I have studied the books of *scripture*, and more especially the new-Testament, for above thirty years. From thence I have taken my notions of *christianity*, and of the evidences of it. I have read the objections of the *infidels*. And have found, that their acquaintance with the scriptures is but very superficial: that they have no steddy principles of their own: and that their design is to pull down *christianity*, without giving the world any other scheme of *religion*, or *morals*, instead of it.” *Idem*. Preface to the 3d Vol. of the History of the first Planting of the christ. relig. p. 7. Compare Dr. *Law's* most excellent Note (σ) in Reflections upon the Life and Character of Christ: p. 301. — 306. Edit. 5. (where, amongst other things, there is some account of the celebrated Mr. *Chubb*; and some proofs of his ignorance and unfairness:) and *Jortin's* Remarks on E. H. Vol. I. pref. p. 39.

injunction, he *proves all things, and holds fast that which is good.*†

18. And here I cannot forbear observing, that as those, who are so forward and prone to deny this privilege to others, are yet at the same time very absolute and peremptory in claiming it themselves, and wou'd deem it highly unfair and unreasonable, were any to dispute the justness of the claim,—One is naturally led to enquire, upon what grounds they challenge a right of thinking and judging for themselves, exclusive of the rest of mankind: A Query, to which, I apprehend, it wou'd be impossible to give a satisfactory answer.

19. Nor do I see, how persons of this complexion, who have such an extravagant veneration for their own judgments, as to set them up for a kind of standard and test of truth, can

† 1. Theff. 5. v. 21.

“Every christian may, and ought to enquire into the christian faith, and interpret the scriptures, as well as he can, for himself: and may receive what help and assistance he can, from others: But their interpretations of one, or more texts, deserve no regard, any farther than they carry evidence along with them.” *Benson's Life of Christ*: p. 328. See too p. 335. 336. and *Foster's Discourses &c.* Vol. II. p. 109. — 211. Compare *Clericum de eligenda &c.* §. 9. in fin.

can keep clear of the charge of excessive vanity and self-sufficiency: He who looks upon all, except those, whose tenets exactly coincide with his own, as surrounded with the gloom of ignorance, and bewildered in the mazes of error, may be deservedly considered, as offering the highest insult to the capacities and understandings of the rest of mankind; as proudly arrogating to himself a larger share of sense and discernment, than what falls to the lot of mortals; and as presumptuously and absurdly setting himself up for an infallible arbitrator of religious controversies, and a person, from whose judgment there lies no appeal.

20. And thus much may suffice to shew the absurd and oppressive nature of an intemperate party-zeal in religious matters. Proceed we next to the consideration

V. Of its utter contrariety and repugnancy to the temper and proceedings of the first preachers of the gospel, Christ and his Apostles; and more especially, when it breaks forth into the mad fury and violence of persecution.

The Jews and Samaritans, as is well known, had a dispute about the place, where God
was

was to be worship'd. §. The former contended for the temple at Jerusalem; the latter, on the contrary, maintain'd, that their's upon mount Gerizim was the place, where the Deity chose to have adoration paid him; † and therefore wou'd not receive our Saviour, in his way to Jerusalem, as by going thither upon a religious account, he decided the controversy in favour of the Jews. Enrag'd at this indignity put upon their master by the Samaritans, his disciples *James* and *John* (who seem at that time

§ With regard to the original of the Samaritans, and the causes of that violent hatred and aversion, which subsisted between them and the Jews, the reader may consult *Le Clerc's* Prolegom. to his Ecclesiast. Hist. Sect. 1. Cap. 7. Ecclef. Hist. p. 226. *Dupin's* Compend. Hist. of Church: Vol. I. p. 179. 209. 210. Edit 2d. *Prideaux's* Connection: Vol. I. p. 30. 31. 32. 33. 161. 162. 174. 191. 193. 194. 232. 413. — 415. Vol. II. p. 334. 335. 8vo. Edit. 6th. *Lewis's* Heb. Antiq. Vol. I. p. 30. 31. Vol. III. p. 47. — 50. 51. *Lardner's* Credibility &c. Vol. I. p. 266. — 271. *Hallett's* Notes and Discourses: Vol. III. p. 30. — 33. *Stackhouse's* Hist. of Bib. Vol. II. p. 894. — 896. 1070. 1071. 1243. 1244. in Not. 1358. and Not. *Benson's* History of the first Planting of the Christian Religion: Vol. I. p. 150. — 158. *Rutherford's* first Letter to *Kennicott*: p. 3. 4. *Law's* Considerations &c. p. 318. 319. Edit. 5. *Benson's* Life of Christ: p. 121. 122. 382. 383.

† See *Prideaux's* Connect. Vol. I. p. 421. 422. Vol. II. p. 267. *Lewis's* Heb. Antiq. Vol. III. p. 54. *Benson's* Life of Christ: p. 384.

time to have been entire strangers to the genius and spirit of the religion, he was going to establish in the world;)* were for *calling down fire from heaven to consume them*. But the

* “*John* was one of the two, that was for calling down fire from heaven upon the *Samaritans*, who wou’d not entertain Christ. Such a length did his zeal then carry him; but that was a zeal without knowledge. — But after the *spirit* was pour’d out upon him, his mind was enlarg’d, his zeal guided by knowledge and charity. And then he makes no scruple of going to the *Samaritans*; imparting unto them *the gift of the holy spirit*; and acknowledging them for *christian brethren*, whom his *jewish* zeal wou’d have burnt up and destroy’d.” *Benson’s History of the first Planting &c.* Vol. I. p. 163. Note. See too pag. 165. and *Life of Christ*: p. 259. 624. 625. In which latter place, among other just observations, the worthy author makes this: “The new Testament every where condemns a spirit of persecution: and no part of the Bible supports, or encourages it.” — This is so true, that *St. Paul* styles himself the *chief of sinners*, because he had been a persecutor; as is well, and fully shewn by *Hallett*, *Notes and Discourses*: Vol. II. p. 130. — 142. See too Vol. III. p. 150. and the ingenious *Mr. Alexander’s* *Notes upon 1. Cor.* 15. p. 66. 67.

As to the famous text, *Luke* 14. v. 23. urg’d by the Romanists and others in support of religious persecution, ’tis well known, they have perverted and wrested it to an incongruous and absurd sense; and that they have offer’d great violence to this passage of scripture, to make it countenance and justify the offering of violence to the natural and religious rights of mankind. The word *αναγκαστον* means nothing more than

the holy and benevolent Jesus check'd their misguided and intemperate zeal, by assuring them, that to use harshness and severity towards erroneous persons was a proceeding entirely opposite to the calm temper of christianity, which

than *persuade*, or *prevail upon*; — *persuade*, or *prevail upon them to come in*; as is plain to a demonstration, not only from the nature of the thing, but also from a numerous Collection of texts in Dr. *Clarke's* admirable Sermon quoted above, drawn both from the old and new Testament, in which this same, or some similar expression occurs. See too *Le Clerc's* excellent Animadversions, and *Grotius's*, *Whitby's*, and *Wolzogemius's* Annotations ad loc.

Le Clerc and *Wetstein* have produc'd a passage from *Horace*, where *cogo* is manifestly used in the same sense, as *αναγκάζω* here in *St. Luke*:

————— *Nam cum rogat, et prece cogit,
Scilicet ut tibi se laudare, et tradere coner,
&c. Epist. I. 9.*

To which I can add another from *Ovid*:

*Cui Dea, Duc, inquit; scisti, qua cogere posses:
Seque levat saxo, subsequiturque senem.*

Fast. IV. 527. 528.

Perpello, as is well known, has the same signification: *Ad hoc, collegam suum Antonium pactione provinciae perpulerat, ne contra rempublicam sentiret*: *Sallust. B. C. 27. Edit. Wasse. Jam inter hæc eminus petebatur; quum testudine objecta milites, qui, ut inde discederet, perpellere nequiverant, tuebantur. Curt. V. 3. 9.*

Compello too has the same acceptation in the following passage of the last mention'd author: *Alexander, cum et classem procul haberet, et longam obsidionem magno sibi ad cætera impedimento videret fore, caduceatores, qui ad pacem eos compelleret, misit*: *IV. 2. 15.*

which is *pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works*;† and that it was repugnant to the end, for which he came into the world, which was to *save mens lives, and not to destroy them*. A rebuke this, which one wou'd think those had neither ever read, or heard of, who, to convert others of different opinions to their own faith, have recourse to force and compulsion, instead of reason and argument, and to torturing the body, instead of giving conviction to the mind.

21. And what makes this behaviour of our blessed Saviour the more amiable and god-like, and consequently, an opposite conduct in his disciples and followers the more hateful and diabolical, as well as absurd and unreasonable, is, that the Samaritans were indisputably mistaken, and he infallibly knew them to be so. Whereas we mortals are, at best, but short-sighted fallible creatures; and the most enlighten'd among the *sons of Adam* are in many cases so far from certainly knowing themselves to be in the right, and others in

† — “There are no characters in the world more opposite to each other, than those of a *Christian*, and a *Persecutor*.” Bourn's Discourses: Vol. II. P. 435.

in the wrong, that we frequently see men of the acuteſt diſcernment and moſt improv'd underſtandings, contending for opinions confeſſedly extravagant and chimerical, and fighting againſt principles as undoubtedly plain and irrefragable, founded upon the nature and conſtitution of things, and the ſolid and immoveable baſis of truth. †

22. What a high degree of lenity and tendernels did the Apoſtles likewise, (after the effuſion of the holy Spirit,) in imitation of their divine Maſter, ſhew in all caſes, where religion was concern'd, to the miſtaken notions, inveterate prejudices, and ſcrupulous weakneſſes of mankind; and more eſpecially of the firſt converts to Chriſtianity. To inſtance in *St. Paul*:

This Apoſtle having had a particular account given him of the ſtate of the Chriſtian church at Rome, and amongſt other things, been inform'd, that there was no good agreement between the Jewiſh and Gentile converts, — In order, if poſſible, to compoſe their differences, and put an end to their diſputes, and the animoſities and diviſions conſequent upon them, thought it neceſſary and proper, to

† Vide, ſi ita libeat, *Clerici Crit. Epist.* p. 281. 282. Edit. 5.

lay down some directions and exhortations in the Epistle, he intended shortly to send them. What occasion'd these disputes was, that the Jewish christians still retaining a veneration for the law of Moses, abstain'd from certain meats, and were observant of certain days; while the Gentiles from a thorough persuasion, that the Christian religion laid them under no such obligations, paid no regard to either. The consequence was, The Jew condemn'd the Gentile, as a latitudinarian, little better than a meer heathen, and one, who was likely to relapse into idolatry again. The Gentile, on the other hand, censur'd and despis'd the Jew, as a person of narrow, superstitious principles, enslav'd by foolish prejudices, and under the influence of childish and groundless scruples. §

23. Now *St. Paul* most earnestly exhorts both parties to moderation; to a favourable opinion, and kind treatment of each other; and by no means to suffer a difference of sentiments to break in upon and disturb their Christian communion and fellowship: *

Him

§ See the Contents of the 14th Chap. of Rom. in Dr. *Taylor's* Notes, p. 357. Edit. 3. * See again *ibid.*

Him that is weak in the faith receive you; but not to doubtful disputations: †

“ I desire you Gentile converts wou’d
 “ chearfully receive the weak and scrupulous
 “ Jewish christian into church-communion
 “ and fellowship; and do not teaze and vex
 “ him with uncharitable censures, or per-
 “ plexing and uninteresting disputes about
 “ his opinions.” §

*For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs: * —* “ Under
 “ this diversity of sentiment, be candid, mode-
 “ rate, and peaceable:” †

Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him, which eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath receiv’d him.

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind: || —
 “ Let every man form the best judgment
 “ he is able, as to these controverted points,
 “ and act accordingly: Because both parties
 “ may think and act differently, yet with
 “ the same sincere intentions, and religious
 “ dispositions: ‡

He

† Rom. 14. v. 1. § See *Taylor’s* paraphrase in loc.
 * Rom. 14. v. 2. † *Taylor* *ibid.* || Rom. 14. v. 3. 5.
 ‡ See *Bourn’s* Discourses: Vol. II. p. 424.

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Let us therefore follow after the things, that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. §

We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

*Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God: * — “Notwithstanding these religious differences, freely
“ receive each other into Christian fellowship,
“ remembering that Christ hath receiv’d us
“ all to the glorious state and blessings of the
“ gospel.” †*

24. And to insert the remark of an honest and ingenious writer here by the way, The authors and abettors of religious persecution have always proceeded upon a supposition, that they themselves were in the right, and those, whom they persecuted, in the wrong. Now, besides the futility of this plea in taking the very point in question for granted,

’tis,

§ Rom. 14. v. 6. 19. * Ibid. 15. v. 1. 7. † Taylor in loc.

'tis, as we see, directly contrary to the Apostle's doctrine, which is, that "They, *who* " *are* STRONG, or, " who really have truth " on their side," *ought yet to bear* with the errors of the weak and scrupulous." *

25. Such was St. Paul's treatment of erroneous, but well-meaning professors of Christianity: Such was HIS method of settling religious differences, and reconciling and terminating disputes and controversies. Happy would it have been for the Christian church, and indeed for the world in general, had all succeeding ages copied after the amiable *example* he left them, and been wise and disinterested enough to *follow* HIS steps.

But I pass on in the

VI. and Last place, to the mischievous and fatal consequences, which are naturally attendant upon all violent and compulsive measures, where religion is concern'd.

26. We have already seen, that by precluding and taking away all deliberate conviction, and freedom of choice, they at the same time destroy the very nature and essence of all true piety; and substitute in it's room the vain and empty formality of a meer outside profession: We have seen too, that persecution

* *Bourn's Discourses: Vol. II. p. 436.*

secution obliges men to profess alike, whilst they believe differently; i. e. to be continually guilty of the most base, disingenuous, and detestable hypocrisy.†

27. To these considerations I now subjoin, that persecution is so far from effecting an uniformity, that it must from the nature of things establish and confirm an endless diversity of opinion: And what is the most shocking and dreadful consequence of all, by compelling men to be of one particular religion *outwardly*, it frequently occasions them to be *inwardly* of no religion at all.

28. The propagation of any particular system by force and violence, tends likewise to bring dishonour upon Christianity in general; to set it upon a level with every the lowest species of religious imposture; and thus to degrade it's sublime and god-like doctrines to an equality with the romantic reveries, and wild extravagancies of *Mahomet's* Alcoran,* and the idle tales and ridiculous absurdities of

† See above, sect. 12. 13.

* Vide *Grotium* de Veritate &c. lib. 2. §. 18. p. 138. lib. 6. §. 5. p. 283. §. 7. p. 285. 286. §. 11. p. 295. Edit. *Clerici*, and *Bourn's* Discourses: Vol. II. p. 437. — 439. "Generosiores animi, intelligentesque, probare nequeunt vim, quæ Mendacii, non Veritatis est satelles." *Clericus* de eligenda &c. §. 13.

of *Popish* Legends. Such oppressive measures therefore, whenever pursued, cannot but kindle the strongest resentment, as well as raise the deepest concern in every rational and impartial believer, as being duly sensible, that the religion of Jesus was design'd by it's divine Author to be an appeal to the reason and understanding of mankind; that it was from it's own genuine excellency and perfection to recommend itself to the approbation of every candid and unprejudic'd searcher after truth; and that accordingly it has stood, and will stand the test of the most rigid and scrupulous enquiry.

But farther:

29. As the most likely, and indeed the only method of reclaiming and convincing the erroneous, is a mild, gentle, and condescending behaviour, in conjunction with clear nervous reasoning, and solid cogent argumentation, and as one might rationally hope, by these means, to make some impression upon them, and by degrees to bring them *to the acknowledgment of the truth*,†—So severe, violent, and imperious treatment will naturally offend and disgust them: will raise their indignation and

† 2Tim. 2. v. 25.

and resentment; will inflame and harden their minds, and fix and confirm them in their prejudices: will render them deaf and inattentive to the voice of reason, and, in the end, obstinate and incorrigible.*

30. These are observations, the truth and justness of which do not rest upon mere speculative and theoretic reasoning only, but are likewise confirm'd and establish'd by facts, and the constant and uniform experience of mankind. Those, who are vers'd in Ecclesiastical History, well know, that bigotry and persecution have all along been so far from healing, that they have encreas'd the divisions; and widen'd the breaches of the Christian church: Nay, the excessive zeal and rancour of controversial writers have been productive too, tho' not in the same degree, of very hurtful and pernicious consequences. They have frequently occasion'd sects and parties to be form'd amongst christians; have embittered them against, and made them hateful to each other; have infus'd into them a spirit of disputatious wrangling and angry contention; and thus been the fruitful sources of faction and schism, of enmity and malice, of dissension and opposition.

31. Nor

* See *Foster's Discourses &c.* Vol. II. p. 301.

31. Nor has the mischief stop'd here: The inhuman violent persecutions, and the hot furious controversies, which have been so often, and with such eagerness and zeal, carried on by those, who have profess'd themselves Christians, have occasion'd many to renounce the faith, and to commence sceptics and unbelievers.* And tho' it is undoubtedly utterly disingenuous and unfair, to argue against the intrinsic excellency, and beneficial tendency of any doctrine or institution, from meer accidental abuses, and the mistaken notions, or bad practises of those, who profess

* "They have unhappily help'd (to use the words of the learned Dr. *Jortin*,) to propagate Atheism or Deism, and have made many a man say to himself, "*If this be Christianity, let my soul be with the Philosophers.*" Remarks on Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 351.

"— In Theologia — tantis affectibus res agitur, ut vix umquam, sine periculo, libera de Dogmatibus judicia proferre licuerit. In partes dudum itum est, et quævis factio terrore et minis sua placita muniit. Hinc factum, ut non spernenda ingenia a Religione ipsa Christiana, quæ, si sibi permetteretur, suapte luce animos hominum suo Auctori facile conciliaret, aliena fiant, quamquam præ metu fingunt se ei addictissimos esse; nec ejus quidquam observent, præter id, quod in factione, in qua vivunt, observasse conducit." *Clerici Logic* p. 3 C. 13. §. 10. Edit. 3

fels it,† yet it must be acknowledg'd, that too much reason has by these means been given to the adversaries of our holy religion to blaspheme; nay, that the Christian cause has receiv'd much deeper, and more dangerous wounds, than ever it did from the keenest wit, and acutest arguments of it's most ingenious and subtle opposers. The celebrated writer, whom I have had occasion frequently to refer to in this Dissertation, very justly observes, that “ In the church of Christ, the effects of dissension and opposition, of rash excommunications and causeless schisms, have been extremely deplorable: To the oppression of truth and right; the making christian assemblies seminaries of bitterness and enmity; prostituting the adorable character of the blessed Saviour of mankind, to the prophane scoffs of atheists and libertines; and, in a word, almost to the utter extinction

† “ — Nec hisce objicere licet, Christianos ad id exemplar mores suos non exigere; cum culpa hæc eorum sit, non Legum; quas pravis eorum moribus quidquam gratificari et concedere nemo dicere queat, qui eas propius inspexerit, *sanorumque verborum formam* mente probe conceperit.” *Clerici Prolegom. Histor. Eccles. Sect. III. Cap. II. 27. Vide et Cap. V. 3.—8.*

“ tinction of every thing, but the bare name
 “ of Christianity.” †

32. From what has been laid down we may discern, how wisely in this, as in all other cases, the pure uncorrupted religion of Christ is suited and adapted to the state and constitution of human nature: Inasmuch as, without ever mentioning a perfect unity of opinion in all points, which, as we have seen, is, morally speaking, impossible, it recommends and enjoins an unity and harmony of mild benevolent affections; which are both possible and natural, and would be productive of the noblest and most beneficial effects amongst rational creatures. “ Religious peace and
 “ concord among men, says the great Dr.
 “ *Clarke*, there can possibly be, only by one
 “ or other of the three following ways: Either
 “ by

† *Foster's Discourses &c.* Vol. II. p. 311. Some of the destructive and pernicious consequences of persecution are mention'd by *Le Clerc* in *Crit. Epist.* p. 290. “ — Verum qui dissentientes male habendos
 “ censet, is et sibi, et aliis, et veritati summopere officit:
 “ Ex homine fit fera, salutemque æternam hominibus,
 “ non feris, promissam amittit: Vexat innocentes, in-
 “ numerisque calamitatibus objicit: Veritatem deni-
 “ que, si iis artibus tuetur, infamat; si oppugnat, rem
 “ omnium sanctissimam violat, et Deo veritatis auc-
 “ tori bellum infert.”

“ by the agreement of all in a perfect and in-
“ fallible knowledge of the truth: Or by a
“ compulsive and hypocritical agreement in
“ the maintaining of opinions, which they
“ understand not: Or lastly, by an agreement
“ of mutual charity and good-will, among
“ all, who live in the sincere enquiry after
“ truth, and practise of righteousness. The
“ first of these is the unity which is among
“ Angels: The second is that unity, which is
“ among profane, atheistical, irreligious, or
“ very superstitious men: The third is—the
“ peace and unity, which is among good
“ christians, *walking in love, and giving no*
“ *offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles,*
“ *nor to the church of God.*” §

33. From what has been deliver'd we may likewise see, upon what strong, and just grounds and reasons, the Christian institution, in the severest terms, condemns strife and faction, animosity and contention, as drawing after them the most mischievous and dreadful consequences. We are exhorted to *follow after the things, which make for peace: * to put away evil*

§ *Clarke's Sermons: Vol. VII. p. 162. See too Foster, ibid. p. 307. 309. and Cleric. in libel. de eligenda &c. §. 13. • Rom. 14. v. 19.*

*evil speaking, wrath, anger, clamour, malice:** to be like-minded, i. e. as it is immediately explain'd, *having the same love, or reciprocal universal charity; being of one accord, of one mind:†* to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.‡

34. And cou'd we see the members of Christ's mystical body, divested of bigotry and prejudice, no longer divided by parties and factions, nor stain'd and fullied by viciousness of life, thus join'd together by an union of friendly dispositions and kind affections, and vieing with each other in the promotion of mutual benevolence and good-will, this wou'd give us the strongest idea, we can at present have, of the happiness of the future world, and of those sublime social pleasures, which the righteous will enjoy, when they come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to God, the judge of all, to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. ||

— *Hic*

* Ephes. 4. v. 31. † Philip. 2. v. 2. ‡ Colos. 3. v. 12. 13. See *Foster*, *ibid.* p. 313. and likewise p. 314.
|| Heb. 12. v. 22. 23. 24.

—*Hic* Dissertationi nostræ *finem imponimus:*

Quam si per omnia non probaverint Theologi, non mirabimur: Nec ipsi, qui nostris potius quam alienis oculis credimus, solemus omnia illorum probare. Clericus in Art. Crit. P. 3. S. 3. C. 10. §. 9. mutatis mutandis.

1. The first part of the book is devoted to a general introduction to the subject of the history of the human mind. It discusses the various theories of the mind and the different schools of thought that have developed over the centuries.

1871

1940-1941

This image shows a blank, aged, light brown paper cover or endpaper of a book. The paper has a textured, slightly mottled appearance with some minor discoloration and small dark spots, characteristic of old paper. There is no text or other markings on the surface.

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DISSERTATION II.

ON

The Principal Qualifications and Canons, necessary for the right and accurate Interpretation of the New Testament.

ΣΠΟΥΔΑΣΟΝ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ ΔΟΚΙΜΟΝ ΠΑ-
ΡΑΣΤΗΣΑΙ ΤΩ ΘΕΩ, ΕΡΓΑΤΗΝ ΑΝΕΠΑΙ-
ΣΧΥΝΤΟΝ, ΟΡΘΟΤΟΜΟΥΝΤΑ ΤΟΝ ΛΟ-
ΓΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΣ. 2 *Tim.* 2. ὅ. 15.

DISCUSSION II

The Principal Qualifications and Co-
nitions necessary for the right and
accurate interpretation of the New
Testament

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE
BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW YORK
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DISSERTATION II.

ON THE

*Principal Qualifications and Canons,
necessary for the right and accurate
Interpretation of the New Testament.*

1. **A**S the right and accurate interpretation of the writings of the New Testament is of the utmost consequence and importance to mankind, and as no writings in the world were ever so grossly misinterpreted, and erroneously explain'd, as these have very frequently been,—The design of the following Dissertation is to lay before the candid and impartial reader, the principal qualifications and rules, which seem necessary for the just and legitimate explanation of them:—which will enable us to discern, generally speaking, the true and genuine meaning of this part of divine revelation: and— which therefore may be of some use and service to those, who wou'd read, or comment
D upon

upon it, with a due regard to the unprejudic'd dictates of reason, and the establish'd canons of criticism; and who have no other end in view, but the discovery, or propagation of truth. Without farther Preface then, I observe

2. I. That a competent skill in the Hebrew, as well as the Greek language, is indispensibly requisite for the right and accurate interpretation of the New Testament.

The Evangelists and Apostles, in their peculiar stile and manner of writing,* chiefly express themselves, not in pure, but in the Hellenistic Greek; or such Greek, as we find in the Septuagint Version; which is nothing else but Hebrew idioms, put literally and *verbatim* into Greek words.†

3. "The

* See the Critical Review: Vol. XVIII. p. 463.

† " — This Hellenistic stile is nothing more than
 " the stile of one, who translates a Hebrew book *verbally into Greek*, or, who thinks in Hebrew, and
 " writes in Greek. Suppose any person at any time,
 " whose native language is Greek, who is a Christian,
 " who reads few, or no prophane authors, who never
 " studied his own tongue, who has frequently perus'd
 " the Septuagint and the New Testament, and has
 " them almost by heart, who writes upon a religious
 " subject, who is perpetually citing the scriptures;
 " this person will write in the Hellenistic manner,
 " more or less, and will have Hebrew idioms, even
 though

3. "The Apostles in the new Testament,
" says an eminent Writer, *use the language*
" *and spirit of the Old.* They were Jews, well
" versed in the Jewish scriptures, accustomed
" to their stile and sentiments, and inspir'd
" with the same spirit of truth and wisdom,
" which

" though he should not understand one word of the
" language; especially if he has a mind to affect that
" stile, which is very easily imitated." *Jortin's* Re-
marks on Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 249.

" The chief observation, which I wou'd make con-
" cerning the Greek Translation of the old Testa-
" ment, is, that in the later books, the translator, or
" translators endeavour'd to give *a literal rendering* of
" the Hebrew, and to express it in Greek, *word by word,*
" in the very same order, in which the words stand
" in the Hebrew. This design was so closely and
" superstitiously follow'd, that the translator did not
" regard, whether he writ true Greek, or not, whe-
" ther he writ sense, or not. This is not to be seen
" so much in the first six or seven books of the bible, as
" in the later. The author of the Greek Version of
" the five books of Moses, has allow'd himself a little
" liberty. In the general indeed, the Greek there is
" *a literal translation* of the Hebrew, as will appear
" upon a comparison. The translator introduc'd *the*
" *idioms of the Hebrew language into his Greek,* where
" they make an odd figure. This will appear from
" comparing (for instance) the Hebrew and Greek
" of Exod. 35. v. 1. That the reader may see in the
" easiest manner, *how exactly the Greek follows the*
" *Hebrew,* I shall set down the Greek words under
" the Hebrew: And since I must invert the order of
" one of the languages, I will invert that of the

“ which spake in the antient prophets.
 “ Therefore we must explain the phraseology of
 “ the apostles by that of Moses and the prophets.
 “ And the Greek of the Septuagint Version,
 “ which was commonly read by those Jews,
 “ who

“ Hebrew, and begin the sentence at the left hand
 “ with the Greek :

“ בְּנֵי עֵדֹת כֹּל אֶת מֹשֶׁה וְיִקְהֵל
 “ Καὶ συνηθροισεν Μωυσης πασαν την συναγωγην υἱων
 “ אֲשֶׁר הַדְּבָרִים אֱלֹהִים וְיֹאמַר יִשְׂרָאֵל
 “ Ἰσραηλ, καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὰς, Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι, ۲۵
 “ אַתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה צִוָּה
 “ εἶπεν κυριος ποιησαι αὐτὰς.

“ Here the reader may observe, that as the Hebrew
 “ adds אַתֶּם after אֲשֶׁר, so the Greek adds αὐτὰς af-
 “ ter ۲۵, without any reason but this, that the transla-
 “ tor was resolv’d to make the version *as exactly literal*,
 “ *as it was possible*. — Upon comparing the two
 “ together it is very obvious, that the Greek is con-
 “ form’d to the Hebrew in the order of the words,
 “ in most places, and that originally *the whole of the*
 “ *version* of the later books of the old Testament, did
 “ thus *exactly represent the Hebrew, both as to the num-*
 “ *ber and order of the words*. Nay the translators
 “ were so very superstitious in this regard, as that
 “ when they did not understand the Hebrew, they set
 “ down in the version a number of Greek words, that
 “ shou’d *exactly tally with the Hebrew*. Thus Psal. 21.
 “ ψ. 12. in Hebrew; ψ. 13. in Greek :

“ בְּמִיתָרֶיךָ שָׁבַח תִּשְׁתַּמֵּי כִי
 “ Ὅτι θῆσεις αὐτὰς ὑποφ. εν τοις περιλοιποις σα.
 “ פְּנֵיהֶם עַל תְּכֻנָּתוֹ
 “ ετοιμασεις το προσωπον αυτων.

“ — In

“ who lived in foreign countries, and spake
“ the Greek language, will serve to shew us,
“ what words in the Hebrew correspond to
“ the Greek words, which the apostles use.
“ For the apostles use *the Hellenistic Greek*,
“ into which the old Testament is translated,
“ and which the Jews in their dispersion
“ commonly read.” §

4. As

“ — In this place the translator did not understand
“ the Hebrew, nor even the Greek, which he him-
“ self writ. Yet he translated the Hebrew *word by*
“ *word*, and exactly kept to the order of the Hebrew
“ words. All the difference between them is, that
“ the translator took no notice of the word *ל*; which
“ might have been owing to an oversight; or, which
“ I rather suppose, the word was not in his copy.”
Hallet's Notes and Discourses &c. Vol. I p. 124. 125.
126. See too p. 116. 117. *Glassius* in *Philolog. Sacr.*
lib. 1. tract. 4. sect. 2. can. 2. and *Le Clerc's* *Ani-*
madvers. upon *Hammond*, Acts 6. *ψ. 1.*

§ *Taylor's Key to the Apostol. Writings; &c.* sect.
314. † The whole of this most admirable Key is one
continued and irrefragable proof of what the Dr.
asserts in this particular part of it.

I have before quoted this passage, and likewise
produc'd the authorities of some other learned men,
in confirmation of the point, I am here contending
for: See my *Doctrine of Irresistible Grace &c.* Intro-
duct. p. 7. 8. To which testimonies there cited, may
be added those, which follow:

The

† See too the Preface to his *Heb. Concordance: Sect. V. 2.*
and *Essay on Spirit: §. 93. p. 90. Edit. 2.* and *Alexander's Pre-*
liminary Dissertat. to his paraphr. on 1 Cor. 15. p. 38. Note.

4. As the apostles then were Jews, both by birth and education, and much better vers'd in, and acquainted with the idioms of the Hebraizing, than of pure Greek, it will follow,

II. That

The learned *Trommius* towards the beginning of his Preface to his Concordance to the Septuagint Version, writes thus: “ Neque id solum, quod Scriptores sacri
 “ Novum Testamentum Græco idiomate exprefferint,
 “ sed quod iidem *ipsis verbis ex hac Græca Versione*
 “ *Veteris Testamenti* petitis dogmata sua, et res gestas
 “ sæpe conscripserint. Id quod haud dubie ad splen-
 “ dorem et laudem vetustæ hujus versionis plurimum
 “ confert. Cedo, quot in Evangeliorum historia loca
 “ occurrunt, quot in Apostolicis scriptis citationes ex
 “ Veteri Testamento extant, quæ *totidem verbis in*
 “ *Græca Versione leguntur?* Præterquam quod *passim*
 “ *Stylus in Veteri Testamento Græco usurpatus, in Græ-*
 “ *co codice Novi Testamenti retineatur*, uti a viris doctis,
 “ et in utriusque testamenti stylo dignoscendo exerci-
 “ tatis, luculenter est demonstratum. Quo ipso multi
 “ eo sunt allekti et incitati, ut omnes ingenii nervos in-
 “ tenderent *ad voces et phraseologias Novi Testamenti,*
 “ *ex verbis et loquendi modis Veteris Testamenti, eximie*
 “ *enodandas et illustrandas.*”

The learned *Hammond* in the beginning of his annotation upon *Mark* 14. v. 54. makes the following observations: “ Scriptor hujus libri, ut et alii N.T.
 “ scriptores, et Græci interpretes Veteris, gente He-
 “ bræi erant, et Græcam linguam didicerant. Hinc
 “ fit, ut quamvis Græce scribant, *idiomata tamen*
 “ *Hebraicæ linguæ retinuerint, in formulis loquendi:*”
 The whole annotation is well worth the perusal of the learned reader. See *Hammond's* paraphrase and annot. upon the new Testament, ex Translat. Lat. Clerici. Vide etiam *Millii* Prolegom. §. 108.

The

II. That any idiom, or manner of expression in the New Testament, which may be found in the impure or Hellenistic Greek, is to

The most celebrated *Le Clerc* in his *Animadversiones* upon *Hammond*, Acts 6. *ŷ.* 1. amongst other things remarks, “At illi videntur hallucinati, qui hinc conflare linguam Hellenisticam, quasi ea uterentur Hellenistæ; cum contra videatur fuisse lingua eorum, qui *Judaice tantum emendate loqui poterant, et Græce loquebantur pessime*; quales ii fuere, qui *Vetus Testamentum verterunt Græce, et quales erant etiam apostoli, alique, qui in Judæa Græce loqui didicerant.* Verum neque hæc tam fuit lingua, aut dialectus, quam *Græcæ linguæ corruptio, propter immistos Hebraismos*, ut *Cl. Salmasius*, alique multi ostenderunt.” See likewise his *Crit. Epist.* p. 269.

Mr. *Locke* speaking of the language of *St. Paul's* Epistles, says, “The terms are Greek, but *the idiom, or turn of phrases, may be truly said to be Hebrew, or Syriac.* The custom and familiarity of which tongues do sometimes so far influence the expressions in these Epistles, that one may observe the force of the Hebrew conjugations, particularly that of Hiphil, given to Greek verbs, in a way unknown to the Grecians themselves.” *Pref. to Paraphr. and Notes on St. Paul's* Epist.

Nor can I forbear subjoining some excellent remarks relative to the present subject, from the learned *Pearson*, and the learned and judicious Dr. *Law*: The former of whom has left us the following admonitions: “*LXX. viralis Versio — ad Novum Instrumentum recte intelligendum, et accurate explicandum, perquam necessaria est.* — Multa — Græca sunt in Novo Foedere vocabula, quæ ex usu Græcæ linguæ intelligi non possunt; ex collatione autem cum *Hebræa*,

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to be consider'd as an Hebraism, and inter-
preted as such, tho' it may likewise be fre-
quently met with in the pure Classica! Greek.

To

“ *et ex usu LXX. Interpretum, facile intelliguntur. Quid*
“ σαρεξ, quid πνευμα, apud Græcos scriptores denotet,
“ nemo nescit: At si omnes in universum sensus,
“ quibus his vocabulis Græci usi sunt, recenseantur,
“ nullus omnino invenietur, qui mentem apostolorum
“ attinget. Cum enim בשר *carne* proprie significet,
“ eadem tamen vox ab Hebræis nonnunquam pro
“ homine ipso, aliquando pro humana natura, sæpe
“ pro ejusdem naturæ imbecillitate, aut etiam vitiositate
“ usurpetur, et in hac sensuum varietate, unica voce
“ σαρκος a LXX. reddatur, hinc evenire necesse est,
“ ut quoties apostoli eo sensu usurpent, quem Græci
“ veteres haud agnoverunt, ex Hebræo idiomate, et
“ versione LXX. explicetur. — Ita cum רוּחַ satis proprie
“ πνευμα, qualiter a veteribus Græcis usurpatur, denotet,
“ et præterea etiam apud Hebræos multa alia signi-
“ ficata contineat, quæ apud Græcos haud compa-
“ rent, cum apostoli eo sensu usurpârunt, quem Græ-
“ ci veteres haud agnoverunt, ex Hebræo idiomate, et
“ versione LXX. explicandi sunt. — Unde sciemus
“ quid sit πνευμα Luc. i. v. 37. — nisi meminerimus
“ scriptum Gen. i. v. 14. הַיּוֹלָא מִיְהוּה דְּבַר; quod
“ LXX. transfulerunt, μὴ ἀδυνατήσει παρὰ τὸ θεῶ
“ πνευμα; cum דְּבַר non tantum *verbum*, sed *rem* seu *ne-*
“ *gotium* denotet? Unde cognosceremus &c. &c. Præ-
“ fat. Parænet. before Grabe's Septuagint. † —

The latter speaking of yet farther improvement to be
made in the method of interpreting the sacred Oracles,
amongst other ingenious observations, delivers the fol-
lowing: “ Perhaps we ought to attend still more to the
“ *Hebrew*

† See likewise Farmer's Inquiry into the nature and design of
Christ's Temptation &c. p. 54, Note: Add p. 12. in Note.

To give an instance or two :

5. Τί εμοί και σοί *Job*. 2. ὕ. 4. is a kind of phrase, which occurs in some of the best Greek writers :

In *Anacreon* :

Τί γάρ μαχαισί καμοί ;

Τί πλειάδεσσι καμοί ;

In *Aristophanes* : *Equit.* 1019.

Τί γάρ ες Ἐρεχθεὶ και κολοιοῖς και κυσί ;

In *Demosthenes* : Τί νομῶ και βασανῶ ; In *Arrian* :
(as quoted by *Aulus Gellius*, lib. 1. c. 2.) Τί
ἡμῖν και σοί, ἀνθρώπε ; ἀπολλυμεθα, και συ θελῶν
παίζεις. §.

6. We find it too in Latin authors : In *Cicero* :

“ *Quid huic cum Fabio* ” ? — “ *Cum Vatinii*

“ *legionibus quid erat Antonio* ” ? In *Curtius* :

“ *Quid nobis tecum est ? nunquam terram*

“ *tuam*

“ *Hebrew idiom*, and observe the vast disparity between
“ the Eastern way of speaking, and our own ; for want
“ of which 'tis to be fear'd, we oft retain the words
“ without the sense, nay, with a very different one ; and
“ by adhering too much to the letter, are apt to
“ overstrain most things, and carry them beyond
“ common reason, and the nature of the subject.”
Considerations on the Theory &c. p. 263. 264.
Edit. 5.

§ Vide *Wetsten.* comment. ad *Mat.* 8. ὕ. 29.
where are, besides these, other instances from Greek
authors.

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“tuam attigimus:” * To which examples may be added one from *Ovid*: †

“Quid tibi ait mecum? ———”

7. And yet this idiom here, and in other places of the New Testament, is most certainly an Hebraism; for we meet with it in the Septuagint or Hellenistic Greek, 1 *Kings* 17. ψ. 18. Τι εμοι και σοι, ανθρωπε τα Θεα; 2 *Chron.* 35. ψ. 21. Τι εμοι και σοι, βασιλευ Ισδα; in which places it answers to מַה-לִּי וְלִי in the Hebrew. 2 *Sam.* 16. ψ. 10. 19. ψ. 22. Τι εμοι και υμιν, υιοι Σαρκιας; where it corresponds to מַה-לִּי וְלִי: 2 *Kings* 9. ψ. 18. 19. Τι σοι και ειρηνη; in the Hebr. מַה-לִּי וְלִי.

8. The phrase *Ιδων ειδον Acts* 7. ψ. 34. is a pure Grecism: *Lucian* has it: *Ιδων ειδον, αλλα το πρᾶγμα τεραστιον, τον αυτον πυρ και υδωρ γιγνεσθαι.* || The same kind of expression is found in *Herodotus*: εφη λεγων· εφασαν λεγοντες· in *Plato*: απελθον ωχετο· — Τι φης τον Σιμωνιδην λεγοντα ορθως λεγειν περι δικαιοσυνης; Οτι, η δ' ος, το τα οφειλομενα εκασω αποδιδοναι δικαιον εσι· Τετο λεγων

* *Adi, si ita libeat, Poli synopsis. ibid.* † *In Fast. lib. 4. ψ. 3.*

|| See *Wetsten. ad loc. Phœchen. Diatrib. de Linguae Græc. &c. §. 52. Blackwall's Sacred Classics &c. p. 14. Benson's History of the first planting of the Christ. Relig. Vol. I. p. 134. Note.*

λεγων δοκει εμοι καλως λεγειν* in *Demosthenes*:
 Εχθρος γε υπηρχεν ων* Το γαρ ειναι ενα οντα κυριον*
 in *Aristides*: Ει επεβιω Περικλης, και μη προτερον
 ωχετο απιων. §.

9. But here in the New Testament this idiom is plainly an Hebraism, and to be look'd upon as such; for it occurs in the Septuagint, * (and indeed is taken from thence, as is the whole verse,) and answers to ראה ראה in the sacred language.

10. These two instances will likewise serve to shew,

III. That the idioms of the pure and Hellenistic Greek will sometimes coincide with each other in the manner of expression only, and sometimes both in the manner of expression, and the sense.†

In τι εμοι και σοι there's a sameness of phrase, but a difference in the signification: In ιδων ειδον a sameness both in the phrase and signification; “—Eam, (phrasin) says *Grotius*, “ si ex usu Latini (he might have added *vel Græci*) sermonis interpreteris, contemptum
 “ videtur

§ See *Blackwall*, p. 14. *Viger*. Idiotism. p. 261. 274. Edit. *Hoogeveen*. Port-Roy. Gram. Gr. p. 410.

* *Exod.* 3. v. 7.

† Sometimes, again, they will agree in sense, but not exactly in the manner of expression.

“ videtur inducere. Ita enim Latini aiunt,
 “ *Quid tibi mecum est?* At Hebræis aliud fig-
 “ nificat, nimirum, Cur mihi molestiam ex-
 “ hibes”? §. “ — Loquendi genus est, observes
 “ *Le Clerc*, scriptoribus sacris frequentissi-
 “ mum: *quid mihi et tibi?* quod perinde est,
 “ ac si dixeris, “ fatage rerum tuarum, meas
 “ ipse curabo”: * It is *reprehendendi et objur-*
gandi formula, as the same Writer, *Hammond*,
Whitby, and other Commentators ad loc. have
 justly remark'd. “ The phrase *τι εμοι και σοι*,
 “ says Dr. *Law*, was no more than a common
 “ expression of some gentle rebuke for inter-
 “ meddling

§ Vide annotat. ad *Mat.* 8. *ψ.* 29.

* *Ars Crit.* P. 3. S. 1. C. 17. §. 9. See too his an-
 not. upon 2. *Sam.* 16. *ψ.* 10. 1. *Kings* 17. *ψ.* 18. and
 that excellent chap. in his *Ars Critica*, *de Dissimilitu-*
dine Linguarum; which is as worthy of the careful
 perusal of every scholar, as it was of the pen of the
 celebrated Author: To this may be added likewise,
 the following passage from his *Dissertat. de Stat. Salin.*
 in Append. Comment. in Gen. p. 378. “ — Quo cla-
 “ rius appareat, Orientalium scriptorum stylum, au-
 “ dacioribus translationibus refertum, non ex more
 “ nostro loquendi hodierno debere exponi, quæ maxi-
 “ ma pene est interpretum culpa. Cum sensum *ῥησεως*
 “ investigant, magis adtendunt quid ipsi intelligi vel-
 “ lent, si ita nunc loquerentur, quam quid olim inter
 “ populos, non minus opinionibus et ingenio, quam
 “ temporibus et locis a nobis remotos, intelligi pōtu-
 “ erit.” — And the following very just remark of the
 learned *Dasier* in his Notes upon *Horace*, lib. 1.
 Od.

“ meddling in another’s province; 2 *Sam.* 16.
“ *ŷ.* 10. 19. *ŷ.* 22. 2 *Kings* 3. *ŷ.* 13. 2 *Chron.*
“ 35. *ŷ.* 21.” §. And to make a cursory ob-
servation, that this phrase is to be here inter-
preted not according to the usage of the
Greek and Latin, but of the Hebrew lan-
guage, is clear and evident, were there no
other proof, from hence: That considering
what a great and exalted personage our Savi-
our was, he might very well rebuke his mo-
ther, for making an improper and unseasona-
ble request, or for concerning herself in what
did not belong to her; but He cou’d by no
means consistently with even common pro-
priety

Od. 26. *ŷ.* 2. “— Mais chaque langue a ses façons de
“ parler, et l’on seroit injuste de juger l’une par l’autre.”
There are moreover some good observations upon
this head in *Benson’s* Life of Christ, p. 713. 714.
“ The eastern way of speaking and writing was high-
“ ly figurative and popular; brief, bold, and abrupt:
“ — very different from our plain, prolix, circum-
“ stantial manner of delivering things; &c. —
“ Their various idioms, modes, and forms of speech,
“ tho’ generally adapted to the then vulgar appre-
“ hensions, are now very far remov’d from our own;
“ and never can be taken literally, tho’ we are of all
“ things most apt to do this, and the doing of it has
“ produc’d most of the erroneous and absurd inter-
“ pretations, that ever have disgrac’d these holy
“ books.” Compare too *Law*, Considerations &c.
p. 327. Note. Edit. 5.

§ Reflections on the Life &c. p. 302. Note.

priety and decorum of behaviour, speak to her in a disdainful, or contemptuous manner. But to the point :

11. In ἰδὼν εἶδον we have an example of a phrase, which is the same both in expression and signification, in pure and impure Greek. It has exactly the same meaning in this place of the *Acts*, as in the passage of *Lucian* quoted above, and imports neither more nor less in either. Grammarians indeed and Interpreters have generally imagin'd this kind of idiom in Hebrew to have a particular emphasis in it : But this has been a vulgar error ; as the excellent *Le Clerc* has abundantly shewn in his *Ars Critica*, P. 2. S. 1. C. 4. §. 3. — 5. Annot. upon Gen. 2. v. 17. and Epist. Crit. p. 285. 286.

12. We have seen then, that every expression is to be deem'd an Hebraism in the New Testament, which may be found in the Septuagint Version of the Old ; and nothing to be call'd a pure Grecism, but what is peculiar to pure and Classical, and no where occurs in the Hellenistical and Hebraizing Greek : — We have seen too, that the same phrase may have a different meaning in the impure dialect, from what it has in the pure : — If then

I may be allow'd to make a digression, From these premises I draw this conclusion: That the celebrated Dissertation, in which *Pbocbenius* attempted to prove, that there are no Hebraisms at all in the Greek of the New Testament, is *a capite ad calcem* quite beside the purpose. For not to mention, that as the ingenious *Blackwall* justly observes, "he produces many of his authorities out of low writers, which can have no rank among the genuine Classics,"† All he makes out is, that some phrases, which had been look'd upon by learned men as Hebraisms, are to be found in the same sense in approv'd Greek writers. But this by no means evinces, either

1. That they are pure Grecisms in the phraseology of the New Testament, and that the inspir'd authors us'd them as such; or

2. That because, in some instances, the phrases of pure and impure Greek coincide in signification, as well as form of expression, therefore they do universally, and in all cases; or

3. That when they do not, the sense and connexion of the sacred context will allow them to be interpreted as pure Grecisms, and not as Hebraisms :

All

† Sacred Classics defended, &c. p. 8.

All which points it behov'd *Phochenius* to demonstrate clearly and fully. But, to say the truth, 'twas impossible for him to prove what he aim'd at, if for no other reason than this, That 'twas impossible for him to shew, that these phrases are to be met with only in the pure writers of Greece, and not at all in the Greek Translators of the Old Testament: And without doing this, he did nothing.

13. Nor can I help observing here, that as the stile of the New Testament is remarkable for being plain and simple, and at the same time nervous and expressive, and in many places grand and sublime, so nothing has more contributed to give it all this perfection and excellency, than the frequency of the Hebrew idiom: For there's a plainness and simplicity, a strength, significancy, and majesty, in the Hebrew manner of expression, which is not to be found in that of any other learned language. Besides, the phraseology of the New Testament being, in the main, the same with that of the Old, makes the stile, in which revelation is conceiv'd, more of a-piece, and capable of a more uniform and certain method of interpretation: Not to mention, that by this means too, the evangelical

gelical and apostolical writings stand clear of those objections, which might have been rais'd against them, had they been pen'd in the flowing elegance of *Plato*, the Attic purity of *Xenophon*, the affected spruceness of *Isocrates*, or the over-labour'd and polish'd periods, the gawdy decorations and finery, of the Grecian sophists and rhetoricians: Little reason then I think, was there, why some shou'd decry Hebrew forms of speech, as so many blemishes and barbarisms in the stile of the New Testament, and why others shou'd take a deal of learned pains to banish them out of it. But to return from this digression, I remark,

14. IV. That the original of the New Testament does not so entirely abound with Hebraisms, but that we also frequently meet with pure Grecisms; or, such phrases, and manners of expression, as are not found in the impure, or Hellenistic dialect: § For the knowledge of which therefore, we must have recourse to the antient authors of Greece: and the longer, and more intimate our acquaintance with these writers has been, the more readily and thoroughly shall we understand these idioms, and consequently the sacred text,

§ See sect. 4. 12. of this Dissertat.

text, of which they are part. Now as an acquaintance with the antient Greek, presupposes and implies our having been conversant with the best Latin writers, the conclusion is obvious, that for the attainment of a thorough skill in the phraseology only of the New Testament, (not to mention any other reasons,) a very considerable share of Classcal, as well as of Hebrew learning, will be indispensibly requir'd. And as we can never know *the mind of the spirit*, unless we understand the language of the spirit, so to the want of this very necessary qualification has it been chiefly owing, that the writings of the New Testament have been made by some to patronize the greatest absurdities, and to be prolific in such doctrines, as are totally incompatible with the moral attributes of God, destructive of the nature and constitution of man, and a disgrace to human reason and common sense.*

—But I proceed to a fifth observation; which is,

15. V.

* I cannot forbear mentioning here a Canon of interpretation, much recommended by the learned Dr. *Law*: That when any word or phrase, in any part of the New Testament, and particularly in our Saviour's Discourses, seems capable of different senses, we may with great certainty conclude *the ordinary vulgar sense, known in that time*, to be the true one: The books of the New Testament, and indeed the scriptures in general, were written and adapted to *the*

people;

15. V. That if it be found, that the writings of the New Testament have undergone the fate of all antient books whatever, and have either suffer'd by length of time, and the inaccuracy of transcribers, or have been wilfully corrupted by those, who had some sinister end to answer by it, and in consequence of all this, that a great number of Various Readings, Interpolations, Luxations, Omissions, Transpositions, and the like, have crept into the Text, — The aids of Criticism must of course be applied to; particularly of that branch of it, which lays down rules, how we are to know and distinguish these accidental, or wilful corruptions, and by what means we may be enabled to restore the Text (if it is to be restor'd,) to it's primitive integrity, and genuine purity.

16. Now the sacred Volumes have actually undergone the fate of all other antient books, and been injur'd both by length of time, and the carelessness of transcribers: “ This is a truth, to use the words of Dr. Grey,* which
“ no-
people; and therefore *the plain popular sense* of words and phrases ought to be constantly attended to, and follow'd, in the interpretation of them. See by all means *Law's Considerations* &c. p. 326.—328.

* Introduct. to his Edit. of the book of Prov. p. 21.

“ nothing but the height of prejudice can
 “ hinder any man from discovering, who has
 “ carefully examin’d them.” The Masoretic-
 cal Text of the Old Testament is not a little
 incorrect: * and the various readings of the
 New (the greatest part of which are most un-
 doubtedly so many mistakes of the copiers, †)
 are, as is well known, not a few in number. ‡
 It will be proper however to remark, that
 they are all of such a nature, as neither to
 affect the essentials of religion, nor the au-
 thenticity of the Christian revelation. §

17 But as these inestimable repositories of
 divine and heavenly wisdom, can never be too
 accurately understood, and especially by those,
 who

* Vide *Cappelli* Crit. Sacr. passim: *Hallett's* Notes
 and Discourses &c. Vol. I. p. 90.—104. Vol. II. p. 1.
 —110. Vol. III. p. 16. 30. *Kennicott's* two Dissertations
 on the State of the print. Heb. Text of the
 O. T. passim: my Prolegom. in Lib. Vet. Testam.
 Poet. p. 52.—60. 138.—170.

† I say *the greatest part*: for this is far from being
 the case of all universally; as has been lately shewn,
 with the highest degree of probability, by the in-
 genious Dr. *Worthington* in a Sermon on the *Use,*
Value, and Improvement of various Readings. 1761.

‡ See *Mill's* and *Wetsten's* Editions of the New
 Testam. passim: Add *Le Clerc's* Ars Crit. P. 3. S. 1.
 C. 8. §. 3.

§ See my Prolegom. &c. p. 144. 145. and the
 authors there quoted.

who undertake to interpret and explain them, These various Readings ought to be attentively weigh'd and consider'd, and the sacred Text restor'd, if possible, to it's original purity and perfection. Which is to be effected by a dexterous application of the establish'd canons of criticism, in conjunction with a natural quickness and sagacity, a sound and steady judgment, and a close and diligent study of the sacred writings. It will be necessary also,

18. VI. That an interpreter of the New Testament shou'd diligently attend to the connexion of the context, and the general scope and design of the inspir'd writer, whose sentiments and doctrines, he is illustrating and explaining: — That he shou'd likewise accurately distinguish between *particular* and *universal* propositions: * — what was spoken of *collective bodies of men*, from what was spoken of *individuals*: † and — what was design'd to be

* See my Doctrine of Irresistible Grace &c. Introduction. p. 8. and *Le Clerc's Ars Crit.* P. 2. S. 2. C. 6.

† The not making this very necessary distinction, was the original of the impious and absurd doctrine of Predestination. — But never surely were there two more sorry critics than *Augustin* and *Calvin*; nor ever was *St. Paul* more grossly misinterpreted than by these two great Oracles of Orthodoxy.

Insuperable difficulties will attend the sanction of the

70 *On the Qualifications necessary for the*
 be understood *relatè*, of the first converts to
 Christianity only, or some other particular
 person or persons, from what was intended
 to be taken *absolutè*, or, as applicable to all
 christians in general of all ages : * — That he
 shou'd

the first and second commandments, if we suppose it
 address'd to single persons : But they immediately
 vanish and disappear, if God here spoke to the Jews
 (as undoubtedly He did,) in a *national sense* ; as a
national society, or *collective body of men*. See Hallett's
 Notes and Discourses &c. Vol. III. p. 75.—78. And
 that the promise annex'd to the fifth commandment,
 was, in like manner, not made to particular persons,
 as such, but to the Jewish people, as a *body*, is fully
 prov'd by the same author, *ibid.* p. 123.—128.

* See again my Doctrine of Irresistible Grace &c.
 p. 3. 8. 304.—306. 314. 316.—320. 324. 331. 332.
 and *Le Clerc's* Ars Crit. P. 2. S. 2. C. 4. This Canon
 of sacred criticism is of the utmost consequence and
 importance in the interpretation of the New Testa-
 ment : And yet it has been more frequently, and
 flagrantly violated than any other ; and most of the
 strange and extravagant doctrines, which have so long
 been a reproach and scandal to Christian theology,
 are the unhappy consequences of the violation of it.†
 There are some instances of the erroneous interpreta-
 tions, which have issued from this source, in the places
 of my Doctrine of Irresistible Grace &c. and the chap.
 of the Ars Crit. just refer'd to : — It may not be
 amiss to lay those in *Le Clerc* before the reader here :

“ Moses

† — “ It is absurd to extend those expressions, which are
 “ only applicable to new converts, at the first propagation of the
 “ gospel, to christians of the present age. If writers wou'd more
 “ carefully attend to this circumstance, we shou'd not be
 “ pester'd with so many groundless and antisciptural tenets.”
 Critical Review : Vol. XVIII. p. 104. See too pag. 189.

shou'd explain scripture by scripture, and compare parallel places with each other: — endeavour to investigate the true sense and meaning of the inspir'd writers by consulting them-

“ Moses Gen. 6. *ŷ. 5.* ita loquitur: *Videbat Jehova vitia hominum in terris augeri; nec quidquam eorum animum, præter malum, cogitando quotidie effingere.*
“ Hæc verba ita solent a nonnullis proferri, quasi hoc iis inesset axioma: *Nil quidquam hominum animus, præter malum, cogitando quotidie effingit;* quo perdita totius humani generis nequitia significetur. At ne quid dicam de hyperbole, quæ est in hisce verbis, ut in Commentario ad eum locum ostendi, loquitur Moses *relate ad ante-diluvianos homines, non ad omnes omnium ætatum mortales.* Itaque quod *relate* dicitur, non est *absolute* intelligendum; quo sensu falsum esset: Certum enim est, innumeros pios quotidie multas sanctas cogitationes in animo versare.

“ Psaltes Ps. 14. *ŷ. 2.* hæc habet: *Jehova e cælo despexit in homines, ut videret, an sit sapiens, qui quærat Deum. Omnes defecerunt, una corrupti sunt, nemo facit bonum, ne unus quidem.* Hinc a nonnullis totius humani generis depravatio colligitur; quasi neque temporum, neque locorum rationem ullam habuisset Psaltes. Non diffiteor, gentem humanam universam, excepto uno ejus Redemptore, prolapsam esse, et prolapsuram in peccatum. At Psaltes hæc non dicit *in humani generis concione, sed apud Judæos, in Chaldæa exsulantes;* loquiturque *de iis, qui injusto jugo Gentem suam premebant, nimirum, de Chaldæis;* ut sequentia manifesto ostendunt, quod aliquando ad eum locum demonstrabimus. Nec certe ita quisquam loquatur de quavis ætate, sine maxima hyperbole.

“ Esaias cap. 64. *ŷ. 6.* Omnes, inquit, fuimus instar

themselves, and making them, as much as possible, their own interpreters; * and—to find out and ascertain the genuine force and im-

“*immundi, et omnia nostra justa facinora instar vestis*
 “*sordidæ, aut menstruatæ, ut habet Hieronymus. Hinc*
 “*quidam colligunt, ipsa piorum omnium κατορθωματα*
 “*esse peccato inquinatissima; cum Esaias tantummodo de*
 “*Judæis sui ævi loquatur, qui justa facinora fortasse*
 “*scelera vocabant. Nam licet prima persona utatur,*
 “*liquet eum non nomine suo, sed maximæ partis*
 “*Gentis Hebrææ, loqui.*

“*Paulus 2 Cor. 3. γ. 5. ita loquitur de eo, quod*
 “*antea dixerat, de Apostolatu suo: Fiduciam autem*
 “*hujusmodi habemus, per Christum, apud Deum: Non*
 “*quod idonei sumus per nos ipsos, ad cogitandum quid-*
 “*quam velut ex nobis ipsis; sed quod idonei sumus,*
 “*id ex Deo est; qui etiam fecit, ut idonei essemus ministri*
 “*Novi Testamenti. Manifestum est Paulum dicere,*
 “*se non potuisse per se fieri apostolum, sine revelatione*
 “*et donis cœlestibus, quæ prædicationi suæ pondus*
 “*addarent. Hoc Chrysostomus, hoc Oecumenius et*
 “*Theophylactus, in hunc locum animadverterunt, et*
 “*res ipsa clamat. At nulla ratione habita seriei*
 “*orationis loci, in quo hæc verba exstant, universale*
 “*axioma hinc colligitur, quo significant nonnulli the-*
 “*ologi, post Adami peccatum, neminem hominem ullam*
 “*cogitationem rectam animo versasse, nisi ope inusitatæ*
 “*Gratiæ, quam Deus, præter ordinem naturæ, non-*
 “*nullis largitur. Quod dogma, ut verum statuatur,*
 “*certe ex his verbis Pauli probari nequit, quæ di-*
 “*cuntur relate ad apostolatum, cui idoneus a Deo*
 “*factus erat, non a se,—Sexcenta possent proferri*
 “*talìa, quæ cum relate intelligantur, divulsa ab ora-*
 “*tionis contextu urgentur, quasi absolute intelli-*
 “*genda.”*

* Vide *Wetsten. de Interpretat. Nov. Testament:*
 p. 876. sect. 3.

import of particular words and phrases, by examining all the several places, in which they occur: *—That, lastly, he shou'd be duly acquainted with the Customs and Opinions, which prevail'd in the times of the sacred pen-men, and to which they allude; whether belonging to the Jews, the Grecians, or Romans. †—For without these requisites again, he

* Vide *Wetsten.* *ibid.* sect. 2. 3. p. 875. 876. and *Critical Review* for Decemb. 1764. Vol. XVIII. p. 463.

† Vide *Clerici* Art. Crit. P. 1. C. 1. sect. 3. necnon P. 2. S. 1. C. 13. *Wetsten.* de Interpretat. N. T. sect. 7. p. 878. *Benson's* Life of Christ: p. 271. 272. 713. and a Book lately publish'd by an anonymous Author, entitled, "*Observations on divers passages of Scripture; placing many of them in a light altogether new, ascertaining the meaning of several, not determinable by the methods, commonly made use of by the learned; and proposing to consideration probable conjectures on others, different from what have been hitherto recommended to the attention of the curious; grounded on circumstances incidentally mention'd in books of voyages and travels into the east.*" The knowledge of the Hebrew Antiquities is in a very especial manner necessary for the right interpretation of the New Testament; just as necessary, as for the right interpretation of the Old; or as an acquaintance with the Antiquities of Greece and Rome is for the thorough understanding of the Classics. Our Saviour, as is well known, preach'd only to the Jews; (for the Samaritans were in effect Jews, and with great justice and propriety treated by our Lord as such: See *Benson's* Hist. of the first Planting &c. Vol. I. p. 159. See too p. 3. 149, Vol. II, P. 334,

he must of course fall into false and erroneous explanations of scripture. And indeed it's too well known, that those, in whom these requisites have not been found, have so interpreted the sacred Oracles, as to make them a fruitful source of the most enthusiastical extravagant doctrines; doctrines, which are injurious to the attributes of the Deity, subversive of the human frame and constitution, and, in their natural tendency, destructive of an assiduous and constant cultivation of moral virtue, the great and genuine essence of pure and undefil'd religion, the confessed end and scope of all the dispensations of heaven. "It gives us
 "pain, say the learned and ingenious Authors
 "of the *Critical Review*, to see men of piety
 "and learning perverting the words of revelation, and inculcating religious notions,
 "which are not to be found in scripture. The
 "mis-

p. 334. Mat. 15. v. 24. Rom. 15. v. 8.) both spoke and acted in exact conformity to their usages and customs; and accommodated himself, upon some occasions, to the vulgar notions and opinions. His Apostles, as has been already observ'd, were Jews both by birth and education: And as, upon this account, they chiefly express themselves in Hebrew idioms and forms of speech, so, for the same reason, they chiefly allude to Hebrew manners and customs, opinions and sentiments, rites and ceremonies, &c. These then an Interpreter of the New Testament ought to be well vers'd in.

“ misfortune is, they inconsiderately apply
“ those expressions which were address’d to
“ *the first converts, to christians of the present*
“ *age*; those which were address’d to *whole*
“ *societies*, they apply to *individuals*; those
“ things, which are spoken of *the extraordinary*
“ *operations of the Holy Spirit in the apostolic*
“ *age*, they ascribe to *his influence in succeeding*
“ *times*; those, which relate to *the practical*
“ *wickedness of the heathen world*, they apply to
“ *the natural constitution of every child of Adam*;
“ and those which relate to *the christian dis-*
“ *pensation*, they apply to *a future state*.* By
“ these means they envelop the doctrines of
“ the gospel in darkness and mystery, and
“ father nonsense and blasphemy upon the
“ word of God.”† And most certainly, as
nothing is to be found in scripture, inter-
preted by good sense and sober criticism, but
what is strictly consonant to the moral per-
fections of the supreme Being, the suggestions
of right reason, and the obligations of virtue,
so to mistaken glosses, and inaccurate inter-
pretations of the sacred writings, every mon-
strous

* *Review for October, 1764. Vol. XVIII. p. 293.*
See too p. 189.

† E. g. Many passages relating to justification,
salvation, &c.

strous tenet, every marvellous dogma, replete and big with absurdity and contradiction, at first ow'd it's birth : And no less true is it, that upon the strength of these same mistaken glosses, and inaccurate interpretations, the patrons of all such strange opinions have since endeavour'd to confirm and establish them. The excellent Dr. *Jortin* in the first of his Dissertations upon various subjects, has assign'd several causes, why so many in the christian world have run into the erroneous doctrines of absolute Predestination, Irresistible Grace, and the like : Among the rest we find the following one : “ An injudicious method
 “ of interpreting the sacred writings, of ex-
 “ pounding single texts, and fragments of
 “ scripture, without considering or under-
 “ standing the system of Christianity, and the
 “ scope and intention of the writer, and with-
 “ out giving fair play to human reason and
 “ natural religion, but ever flying for shelter
 “ to mystery, and to implicit faith.” §

19. VII. An interpreter of scripture ought, in the next place, to pay a most religious regard to the dictates of his rational faculties, and the immutable obligations of religion and morality. As a really divine revelation
 can-

cannot possibly enjoin us any practise, which our conscience tells us is sinful, so neither can it propose any doctrine to our belief, which our reason assures us is palpably false and absurd. This is that inborn internal light, that *candle of the Lord* shining in the breasts of rational creatures, which, without making God inconsistent with himself, no supernatural external revelation can by any means be imagin'd to oppose and contradict: * This is that chief distinguishing characteristic, by which the man is discriminated from the brute: This is that noble faculty, by the possession of which we have a place in the great scale of intellectual beings, and can claim some sort of association with celestial spirits: This is that excellent endowment, by which we are enabled to remove the uncertainty and unsteadiness of opinion, and to introduce the certainty and stability of science: § We ought therefore at all times, and especially when we are searching after the divine truths of the gospel,

* Vide *Clerici* Histor. Ecclesiast. Prolegom. Sect. II. Cap. VII. 6. p. 88.

§ Vide *Clerici* Op. Philosoph. Tom. I. p. 85. Edit. 3. Vide etiam *Cic.* de Orator. lib. I. §. 20. 23. 2. §. 7. Edit. *Pearce.* de Legg. lib. I. §. 10. de Natur. Deor. lib. 2. §. 2. Edit. *Davies.*

78 *On the Qualifications necessary for the*
gospel, to follow it's direction, and to tread
in the path, it points out to us. Thus we
shall keep within the bounds of a rational
faith, and not run into the excesses of a su-
perstitious credulity: We shall be free from
the perplexing doubts of scepticism, and se-
cur'd from falling into the extravagancies of
enthusiasm.

20. Nor must an interpreter of the New
Testament ever loose sight of the fixt and un-
changeable relations of things in the world,
and of the respective duties, which arise from
them.

It is certain both from the evidences of
reason, and the repeated declarations of our
great Instructor, the blessed Jesus, that the
whole of religion consists in the uniform con-
scientious discharge of those several obliga-
tions, the relations we stand in to God and
our fellow-creatures lay upon us; and the
strict performance of those duties, we owe to
ourselves: Or, according to the rational and
apostolical distinction, in Piety, Benevolence,
and Self-government.* Revelation then, un-
less repugnant to reason, and inconsistent with
itself, cannot possibly contain any proposition
oppo-

* See *Benson's Tracts*: pag. 64. 65. Edit. 4.

opposite to, and subversive of such religious and moral obligations.

21. Shou'd therefore any particular passage in the New Testament seem, at first view, to assert what is irreconcilable either with the dictates of reason, or the plain undoubted duties of religion and morality, the sensible and judicious Interpreter will either conclude, that he takes it in a wrong sense, or be inclin'd to suspect, that the original has suffer'd through length of time, or the inaccuracy of transcribers, (a misfortune, without a continual miraculous interposition, impossible to be prevented;) but will never think of founding a doctrine upon it, which must be incompatible with what the universal reason of mankind loudly proclaims to be true, what is in the nature of things fixt, immutable, and eternal, and like the Deity himself, *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.**

22. But

* “ When reason is discarded, and call'd many
“ hard names, (such as *carnal, shallow, empty, sensual,*
“ *diabolical,* and *vain,*) what can be expected from
“ men who have lost their reason, or renounc'd it?
“ and who ought to be put under the care of phy-
“ sicians, in a dark room, and have their heads shav'd,
“ before they be allow'd to read the scriptures, or
“ allow'd the use of pen and ink: They, of all per-
“ sons, are most unfit to settle articles of faith, or
“ rules

22. But in order to make a due use and application of the natural and acquired qualifications hitherto mention'd, and to derive from them all those advantages, which, when properly us'd and applied, they of course bring with them, — There will be need of

VIII. An openness and liberality of sentiment, an entire freedom from all prejudice and partiality in favour of any particular notions in religion.

He

“rules of worship and practise. And yet none more
“busy to provide a creed for others, and ruin them
“if they will not swallow it.

— “I look upon mystical divinity to be a thing
“of the most dangerous consequence, tending to the
“ruin of religion, and the destruction of common
“sense, unhinging men's minds, and paving the
“way for infidelity, and every evil work.” *Benson's*
Life of Christ : p. 274. 275.

“In what a sad situation is the christian religion !
“Our Lord was crucified between two robbers. His
“religion meets with a like fate. The pretended
“friends of christianity do, many of them, misrepresent it, and teach for doctrines the commandments
“of men, mystical flights, unintelligible and absurd
“notions, which have no foundation in reason, or in
“the word of God. The enemies of christianity rejoice in the absurdities of christians, and wou'd
“gladly have it so. What abundant occasion, therefore, is there, that the scriptures shou'd be examin'd
“with a critical skill and exactness, and faithfully interpreted, that christians may not be impos'd upon
“or deluded, by the one, or the other.” *Ibid.* p. 352.

He that means to find out the true and genuine sense of the sacred writings, must look with the same common indifference upon all theological opinions, 'till having thoroughly examin'd into the real merits of each of them, he shall be able to judge with accuracy, which carries with it the greatest conformity to truth; which is most agreeable to the suggestions of reason, and the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of revelation. Bigotted preconceiv'd notions in every kind of study, will, of course, stop up the passages, and block up the avenues, where truth shou'd enter. The man, that is previously bias'd in favour of any particular opinion, or attach'd to this or that system of Theology, will be too apt to press scripture into it's service; too forward to make the certain unerring doctrines of the gospel yield and give way to the uncertain erroneous decisions of frail fallible men. And thus a meer human scheme of faith, and not the word of God, will be preposterously made the test and criterion of truth.

"The christian divine, as the *Critical Re-*
"viewers very justly observe, shou'd forget,
"if possible, all theological systems and pre-
"conceiv'd opinions; divest his mind of party-
"prejudice and disputatious zeal; read the

“ sacred text with impartiality and freedom,
 “ and explain it by sober sense and rational
 “ criticism. Then (no matter what becomes
 “ of human systems,) the truth wou’d be dis-
 “ cover’d, the Christian revelation wou’d ap-
 “ pear rational and consistent, and we shou’d
 “ see who are the corrupters of the gospel.” §

23. As a natural strength and clearness of understanding, and a large share of acquir’d knowledge, will enable the candid and impartial investigator of religious truth, to understand with exactness and precision *the mind of the Spirit* in the sacred volumes, and to discover the true scheme of the gospel, and by this means both to drink of himself, and to impart to others the pure *chrystal waters of life*, — So these same talents and abilities, as exercis’d and applied by a person of an opposite complexion, or, a bigotted prejudic’d theologist, will serve only to throw a veil over the certain and obvious meaning of scripture, to perplex and embarrass it’s plainest and most intelligible doctrines, to hide from him the true intentions of divine wisdom in the Gospel-Institution, and to adulterate and corrupt the living fountain of God’s word by an

an impure mixture of *philosophy and vain deceit*, of the traditions, commandments, and doctrines of men, of absurdities, impossibilities, and contradictions.

24. And thus much may suffice upon the principal Qualifications and Canons, necessary for the right and accurate Interpretation of the New Testament.

— *Quid vero hac Dissertatione præstiterimus, eorum erit judicium, qui hæc studia animo veritatis cupido coluerint; quorum censuræ eam subjicimus libentes. — Aliorum, qui nihil legunt præter Systemata Theologica, aut ejusmodi libros, et de hisce rebus ex præconceptis temere opinionibus judicare audent, suffragia nihil moramur. Neque illi hæc legent, neque nos eorum scripta evolvemus; sed Juventuti, quæ ab iis decipi potest, succurrendum judicavimus.* Cl. Clericus in Prolegom. in Vet. Fœd. Translat. et in Art. Crit. P. 3. S. 1. C. 2. §. 23.

POSTSCRIPT.

NOT unmindful of the publick declaration I lately made, § “ That I had “ neither leisure nor inclination to enter into “ any farther controversy upon the subject of “ Bishop *Hare*’s Metre,” I can only beg leave to explain more fully than I did before, and yet in as few words as may be, my meaning in two passages of my Latin Epistle, which possibly are liable to misconstruction. One of them is in page 4.

“ ——— Hoc enim syllabarum discrimen,
“ QUALE IN GRÆCA ET LATINA POESI
“ LOCUM OBTINET, in hodiernis linguis,
“ quas vocant, non servari, neque sane, ex
“ harum linguarum indole, servari posse,
“ manifestius est, quam ut negari queat.”

Now I do not here mean, — That there is no difference of long and short syllables, or, of quantity, *at all*, in the modern languages, (for every language hath most undoubtedly its quantity essentially belonging to it;) but,

§ Epist. ad *Lowthium*: sect. ult.

but, as the restraining explanatory clause † was intended to shew, only this:—That there is not THE SAME KIND of difference between long and short syllables, or, THE SAME KIND

† “———QUALE IN GRÆCA ET LATINA
“POESI LOCUM OBTINET:” And this clause, (which the reader will likewise find in pag. 28. 29. of my Lat. Epist.) or some similar one, I should have inserted occasionally in my Prolegomena before, had I not imagin’d, that what I meant would be plain and obvious enough without such a restriction, and had not the greatest and best Writers frequently omitted it: who yet were very far from maintaining, that there was no difference of long and short syllables *at all*, in the Hebrew, or in the modern languages.

The great *Vossius* speaking of the Heb. Poetry says, “———Nam in Jobo et Proverbiis Salomonis solum rhythmus est, non metrum: hoc est, syllabarum numerus, *non quantitas*, attenditur. Idem judicium est de posteriori Mosis cantico. Similes igitur sunt versus, ac Græcorum illi, quos politicos vocant: Hi trochaici tetrametri catalectici videntur, si syllabas numeres, sed *quantitas negligitur*.———Nempe Hebræi in versibus nihil attendunt, præter syllabarum numerum et *accentum*.”———De Art. Poet. Nat. ac Constitut. Cap. 13. §. 2. Vide et Institution. Poetic. lib. 1. cap. 8. §. 12. Aristarch. lib. 4. cap. 36. necnon *Isaacum Vossium* de Poemat. Cantu et Vir. Rhythm. p. 21.—23. Edit Oxon. *Fosterum* de Accent. et Quantit. p. 125.—127. Edit. 1.

In Bp. *Hare’s* Prolegomena p. 10. 24. 27. are the following passages:

“———Dissertationis, qua illam (Hypothesim) explicat et tuetur, (*Clericus*) summa huc redit: “Poësim Hebræam a Græca et Latina longe diversam esse, cum in hac *syllabarum quantitas non attendatur*,

KIND of quantity in the modern languages, as there is IN THE GREEK AND LATIN. What I affirm of the Profody of those languages, I do not affirm *absolutè*, in an *absolute*

“*tendatur*, adeoque illorum metra nec habeat, nec habere possit.——

“In versu tertio clarum exemplum est, Hebræos *parum curasse quantitatem syllabarum*; alias auctor, &c.

“—— in hac Poesi (Hebraica)—— *Quantitatis syllabarum nulla ratio habetur.*”

And yet the learned Bp. does not here assert, that there is no quantity *at all*, in the Heb. Poetry; for we read in his Preface, *Nec aliam sane ob causam videntur homines eruditissimi Hebraicæ Poesi metrum abjudicasse, nisi quod metrum non a numero, sed a quantitate syllabarum*, PROUT APUD GRÆCOS ET LATINOS FIT, *pendere censerent.* p. 3.

In Dr. Grey's Preface to his Edit. of the Book of *Job*, p. 7. the following passage may be found:

“—— Sin vero, concessio quod singulorum ver-
“ suum Initium et Finis certo dignoscitur, velis ad-
“ huc contendere, *quantitatis* æque ac *numeri* syllaba-
“ rum rationem esse habendam, in proclivi est experi-
“ mentum. Assignes cuique suam syllabæ mensuram;
“ efficias deinde canones, ad quos singuli versus exi-
“ gantur, ostendasque, quo pedum numero, quibus-
“ que pedibus, constent. Hoc si plane fieri non pos-
“ se, ut profecto nequit, experimento cognoveris, aut
“ Hebraicam Poesin omni metro carere, quod absur-
“ dum, aut metrum ejus *non a quantitate*, sed a nu-
“ mero syllabarum pendere, (ut in multis etiam hodie
“ linguis fit,) fateare necesse est.”

The very learned *Cappellus* in his *Animadvers.* ad Nov. David. Lyr. p. 657. expresses himself thus:

“*Ubi*

absolute sense, but RELATE', WITH RELATION TO THAT OF THE ATTIC AND ROMAN.

Now quantity, or rather, what determines quantity, or occasions the shortness and length of sounds, is a very different thing (to instance in our own language,) in English, from what it is in Greek and Latin. The quickness and slowness of pronunciation depend upon very different causes, and are settled by very different rules in ours, from what they are in those languages. § In English, the length or shortness of syllables is determined by what is extrinsic, and frequently variable, || the acute or grave Accent;

" *Ubi nulla est longarum et brevium vocalium et syllabarum distinctio*, (ut in hodiernis Europæis linguis vernaculis plerisque, Gallica, Italica, Hispan. Anglicæ, Germanica, Belgica, &c.) ibi nulla etiam &c.

And in the same manner in his Arcan. Punctat. lib. 1. cap. 13. §. 6. "—— Nam et hodie Galli, Itali, Hispani, Angli, Germani, &c. sua habent carmina, eaque elegantissima, cum tamen *discrimen longarum et brevium syllabarum ignorent.*" Vide et §. 4. Adi sis etiam *Isaacum Vossium* de Poemat. &c. p. 43. 44. 49. 50. 77. 78.

§ See *Foster* on Accent & Quantity: p. 26. 40. 42.—44. Edit. 1.

|| For as *Vossius* truly says, "—— Cujuscunque —— naturæ——istæ syllabæ fuerint, id perinde esse creditur." Ibid. p. 33.

cent; † but in the Greek and Latin, by what is inherent and invariable, the nature of the syllables themselves.* Thus in that line of *Pope*,

He sung and bell consented :

the syllables *and* and *con* (which, if we have respect to the common canons of Greek and Latin metre, will be long by position,) are short, merely because they are pronounced with a grave accent; *bell* and *sent* are long, merely because they are pronounc'd with an acute accent: But in the first line of *Anacreon*,

Θελω λεγειν Ατρειδας

the

† This Dr. *Foster* himself allows: “—— We English, says he, cannot well elevate a syllable without lengthening it, by which our acute accent and long quantity generally coincide, and fall together on the same syllable.” He adds in a Note at bottom, “This is confirm’d by the decisive authority of Mr. *Samuel Johnson*:—— He, in the rules of his *Pro- fody* prefix’d to his Dictionary, considers the acute tone and long quantity, in English metre and rythm, as THE SAME.” *Essay on Accent &c.* p. 37.

So again in the next page: “—— The coincidence of the acute and long quantity on the same syllable is certainly most usual with us in the pronunciation of our own language: (which will be admitted by any one, who with this view attends to the sound of an English voice.)” See too p. 54. 56. 82. 149. 150. 211. 212.

* Vide *Vossium* de Poemat. &c. p. 22. 23. 29. 33. 43. 48. 84. 124 — 128. 130.

the syllables $\Theta\epsilon$ and $\lambda\epsilon$ are short, because they are *in themselves*, and *naturally* short; $\lambda\omega$ and $\gamma\epsilon\iota\nu$ are long, because they are *in themselves*, and *naturally* long.

I cannot forbear observing here *en passant*, how very perfect and polish'd the Greek and Roman languages (and particularly the former,) were: As in them the slowness and quickness of pronunciation might be consistent with the nature of the syllables pronounc'd; and thus be regulated according to the nature of things: Which is far from being the case in English and other modern tongues; where syllables are, and indeed from the genius of these languages must be, pronounc'd long and short, whether *naturally* so, or not. See some very ingenious and just observations upon this subject in the learned *Vossius* de Poemat. &c. p. 43. et seqq.——Sed hæc hæctenus.

The other passage of my Lat. Epist. is in pag. 28. and runs thus:

“ Unde constat versum quempiam Angli-
“ canum, qui pari syllabarum numero con-
“ stat, esse Trochaicum? qui impari, Iambi-
“ cum? Unde constat, verbi causa, hunc
“ versum esse Trochaicum?

“ *Woods and groves are of thy dressing.*

“ hunc

“hunc autem Iambicum?”

“*Ah! sweet repose too soon expiring.*”

My meaning, when express'd in a diffuse and particular manner, is this:—That a verse, which consists of an even number of syllables, is, according to Bishop *Hare's* system, a Trochaic, just for the same reason as it is in English Poetry; namely, BECAUSE BEGINNING FROM THE FIRST, IT IS ACCENTED ON THE ODD SYLLABLES: And, in like manner,—That a verse, which consists of an uneven number of syllables, is, according to the *Harian* Metre, an Iambic, just for the same reason as it is in Our metre; BECAUSE BEGINNING FROM THE FIRST, IT IS ACCENTED ON THE EVEN SYLLABLES. The accent to be plac'd, according as the ear directs, on the even or odd syllables of verses, IS THE ONLY THING THAT DETERMINES THEM TO BE IAMBIC OR TROCHAIC in the Hebrew Poetry, as most undoubtedly it is in the English.

I must just add, that I never undertook to defend the Bishop's Hypothesis, consider'd merely as an ingenious Hypothesis, but—as an Hypothesis attended with very important consequences:—as what had been, and
would

would be of great service in clearing up many obscure and unintelligible passages in the Poetical Parts of the Old Testament. I am, from the most attentive, unprejudic'd, and mature reflection, thoroughly convinc'd of the certainty of the discovery in general; and, to use the words of an able Advocate for it, the judicious and learned Dr. Grey, "I am
" so far from having yet seen any reason to
" recede from what I have advanc'd upon
" this head, that the more I consider it, the
" more I am confirmed in the truth of it." §

I

§ Pref. to *The Last Words of David*, divided according to the Metre, &c. sub. init.

One thing however, which I have asserted (Lat. Epist. p. 34. 35.) of our English Verse, "That there are no trisyllable feet," I now see is not true; and therefore desire it may be look'd upon as retracted and unsaid. *Vossio* præeunte, in hunc errorem incidi. In general, undoubtedly, our language, as Dr. Foster justly observes,* is Iambic and Trochaic; and there are not many dactyls in it: Yet we certainly have both dactylic and anapæstic measures. But tho' this be the case in English, I have seen nothing like a trisyllable foot in Heb. metre.

Instead therefore of — "pedes trisyllabi — ex
" metris nostris Anglicanis *penitus* — I should have said
" — *ut plurimum* exterminantur:" and for " — pedes
" sunt omnes — I should have wrote — *plerique omnes*
" sunt dissyllabi."

* Essay on Accent, &c. p. 48. See too Dr. Free on the Origin and peculiar Nature of English Poetry: p. 17. 22--24.

I shall conclude this Postscript, as I have done each of the preceding Dissertations, with a Passage from the celebrated *Le Clerc*; pauculis immutatis, pauculis etiam, pro re nata, interpositis :

—— *Ad rem vero ipsam quod attinet, hoc unum a Lectore veri et æqui studioso postulo, ut ne judicet de hacce controversia, ex solis eorum libris, qui Metricam Harianam oppugnaverunt, sed ut opera eorum etiam perlegat, qui magnum illud et præclarum Inventum propugnarunt: Ex collatione utrorumque Scriptorum satis intelliget, ex utrorum partibus stet veritas, aut verisimilitudo, nisi sit aut iniquus, aut harum rerum prorsus imperitus. Crit. Epist. VII. p. 178.*



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